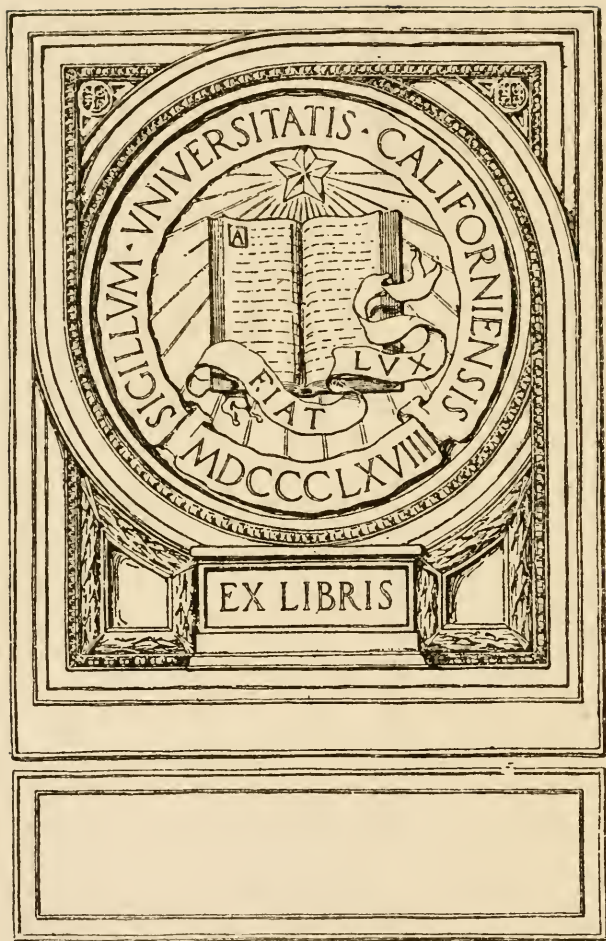


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THE REVISED VERSION  
EDITED FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS

THE FIRST  
BOOK OF SAMUEL

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# THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

THE REVISED VERSION

*EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES  
FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS*

BY

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JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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## PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE aim of this series of commentaries is to explain the Revised Version for young students, and at the same time to present, in a simple form, the main results of the best scholarship of the day.

The General Editor has confined himself to supervision and suggestion. The writer is, in each case, responsible for the opinions expressed and for the treatment of particular passages.

A. H. MCNEILE.



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# INTRODUCTION

## § 1. *The Title of the Book.*

THE history in 1 and 2 Samuel is continuous, and the two books in the oldest known Hebrew manuscripts were one. In the LXX they are called the first and second 'Books of the Kingdoms,' 1 and 2 Kings being the third and the fourth. This title is appropriate because the four books present a continuous history of the monarchy. Although Samuel's death is recorded in 1 Sam. xxv. 1, his name was attached to the first two books because he is the most important personage in the opening period. The book itself contains no hint that he wrote any part of it.

## § 2. *The Place of the Book in the Canon.*

There are three main divisions in the Hebrew Bible, viz. the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The second of these is subdivided into two groups : (i) Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, called the 'Former Prophets'; (ii) Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets, called the 'Latter Prophets.' The inclusion of 1 Samuel among the 'Prophets' is important : the object of the compilers of the historical books was not merely to give a record of events ; their purpose was a higher one ; it was to teach religion. Just as the great prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and the rest, regarded the events which they saw happening during their life-time as intended to bring about the fulfilment of Jehovah's purposes, and utilized them to teach moral and spiritual truths to the people, so did the compilers of the historical

books deal with the history of the past. They were dominated by the prophetic instinct; they read and taught history with the prophet's spirit; to them the philosophy of history was religious philosophy. The position assigned to our book in the Hebrew Canon is, therefore, highly significant; for it indicates the way in which it must be understood if justice is to be done to the intention of the prophetic compilers.

### § 3. *The Contents of the Book.*

The book opens with what is evidently a fragment taken from some biography of Samuel (i.-iii.). Chap. iv. continues the historical narrative of the Hebrews from where it abruptly breaks off at the end of Judges xvi. (the remaining chaps. of Judges form an appendix), and chaps. iv.-vii. 2 describe the subjugation of the Israelites by the Philistines, from whom Samuel delivers them (vii. 3-17), though but temporarily. In chaps. viii.-xv. an account is given of the establishment of the monarchy and the freedom from the Philistine yoke; this section is practically the story of the rise and fall of Saul, though his death does not take place till later. The rest of the book is mainly concerned with the life of David prior to his becoming king; his choice, and anointing, by Samuel (xvi. 1-13), his presence at the court of Saul (xvi. 14-23), his combat with Goliath (xvii.), his friendship with Jonathan, and gradual estrangement from Saul (xviii. 1-xix. 17), and his life as an outlaw (xix. 18-xxx. 31). The narrative is broken by xxviii. 3-25, which tells of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor. The book closes with an account of Saul's death (xxxi.).

### § 4. *Authorship and Sources.*

The Talmud contains a tradition, based on 1 Chron. xxix. 29, that while Samuel wrote chaps. i.-xxiv., Nathan and Gad wrote chaps. xxv.-xxxi. and 2 Samuel. The

Rabbis themselves realized that the narratives were compiled from more than one source. But further : the study of the book makes it clear that it cannot have been written by men contemporary with the events recorded, but has passed through several stages in the course of its transmission :

(a) The original compilation of the book. Various records existed which were utilized by the compiler, consisting partly of official documents, and partly of biographies which were probably not of an official character. In making use of such records the compiler was, however, less concerned about writing a well-constructed and connected history than in preserving the records themselves. Hence it is that we have a number of examples of particular events which are related twice, or sometimes even three times ; e.g., there are three accounts of the choice of Saul as king (ix. 1-x. 16, x. 17-24, xi. 14, 15). The origin of the proverb, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' is given twice (x. 10-12, xix. 18-24). There are two accounts of the rejection of Saul (xiii. 8-15, xv. 10-26), of David's first introduction to Saul (xvi. 14-23, xvii. 12-58), of his sojourn among the Philistines (xxi. 11-16, xxvii. 1 ff.), of his betrayal by the Ziphites (xxiii. 19-28, xxvi. 1 ff.), of his sparing the life of Saul (xxiv. 1 ff., xxvi. 6 ff.), and of Saul's death (xxxi. 4-6, 2 Sam. i. 4-10).

(b) The second stage was that in which the history was coloured by the spirit of the Deuteronomic legislation, i.e. stress was laid upon the moral teaching of history and its lessons ; the school of Deuteronomic historians, therefore, made insertions in the national documents in order to bring these records into harmony with the more exalted tone of the Deuteronomic law.

(c) A third and final stage was that in which the book was edited by the priestly redactors.

§ 5. *Date.*

From what has just been said it is clear that no one date can be given of our book ; in its original form (*a*) it dates from about the eighth century B.C. ; the second stage (*b*) belongs to the seventh century B.C., while the book in its final form (*c*) is post-exilic ; probably it underwent more than one redaction during this last stage.

§ 6. *The Septuagint.*

In the notes of the Commentary the LXX is frequently preferred to the Hebrew ; the reason of this is that a more original form of the Hebrew than that which we now possess was the basis of the Greek translation which is at the very least three hundred years older than our present Hebrew text. It follows that the use of the LXX is quite indispensable for the study of our book. But the LXX, too, has undergone various alterations by editors ; so that it often happens that its text is unreliable. One of the great helps towards reconstructing the genuine LXX text is the 'Lucianic recension,' i.e. the edition of the LXX undertaken by Lucian of Antioch (died 312 A.D.) ; this often embodies readings from Greek manuscripts, now lost, which were older than any at present in existence. The 'Lucianic recension' is, therefore, sometimes referred to in the Commentary.

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 ABBREVIATIONS.

LXX=The Septuagint, i.e. the Greek Version  
(LXX<sup>B</sup>=Codex B of the LXX).

Pesh.=The Peshitta, i.e. the Syriac Version.

Vulg.=The Vulgate, i.e. the Latin Version.

# THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

## DIVISION I.

### i. 1-vii. 1. THE SANCTUARY AT SHILOH.

#### i. 1-23. *Elkanah and Hannah.*

NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, 1  
of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was  
Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son  
of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite: and he had 2  
two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the  
name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children,  
but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out 3  
of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice

---

i. 1. **Ramathaim-zophim.** *Ramathaim* occurs here only; it should probably be read *Ramatham* (= Arimathea), the modern *Bet Rima*, lying north-east of Lydda; elsewhere the name of Samuel's birthplace is always written *Ramah* (e.g. i. 19); possibly *Ramatham* is an ancient form. *Zophim* should be read *Zuphi*, i.e. 'the Zuphite,' see ix. 5; the final *m* has got in through an accidental doubling of the *m* with which the next Hebrew word begins.

2. **no children.** It was regarded as a mark of divine disfavour for a wife to be childless; to the present day barrenness is accounted almost the greatest disgrace that can befall an Oriental woman.

3. **from year to year.** Cp. ii. 19; lit. 'from day to day,' which came by usage to denote the definite period of a year. In later times it was three times a year that every Israelite had to appear before the Lord; cp. *Exod.* xxiii. 17, *Deut.* xvi. 16.



unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests unto the LORD, were  
 4 there. And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her  
 5 daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a double portion: for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had shut  
 6 up her womb. And her rival provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.  
 7 And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she  
 8 wept, and did not eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better  
 9 to thee than ten sons? So Hannah rose up after they

**the Lord of hosts.** The expression occurs here for the first time in the O.T.; the fuller form is 'Jehovah God of hosts.' The words 'the hosts of Jehovah' occur in Exod. xii. 41, cp. Josh. v. 14, 15, where the reference is to armies. Originally, therefore, by the 'hosts' were meant the armies of Israel, who looked upon Jehovah as their leader. The prophets use the expression to imply that Jehovah is the God of the universe, the 'host of Heaven' being included.

**Shiloh.** Cp. Josh. xviii. 1; the modern *Sailûn*, situated about one-third of the way between Bethel and Shechem.

**And the two sons of Eli.** This mention of the two sons of Eli without any previous reference to Eli himself suggests the probability that something has fallen out of the text; in the same way in v. 9 'Eli the priest' is referred to as though he had already been introduced in the narrative.

**4. And when the day came.** Perhaps better, 'And it came to pass on a certain day'; cp. xiv. 1.

**he gave.** The Hebrew has the force of 'he was in the habit of giving.'

**portions.** I.e. of the flesh of the animal sacrificed.

**5. a double portion.** Read with the LXX 'a single portion.'

**7. And as he did.** It is better to read with the Pesh. 'and so she (Peninnah) did,' i.e. vexed Hannah.

**when she went up.** The LXX and Vulg. read, 'when they went up,' which is better.

**9. after they had eaten.** So the LXX, which is evidently more correct; the Hebr. reads, 'after she had eaten,'

had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon his seat by the door post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and 10 prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed 11 a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she con- 12 tinued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her 13 lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, 14 How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I 15 am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of 16 Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered 17

**and after they had drunk.** The LXX reads, 'and she (Hannah) stood up (i.e. to pray) before the Lord'; this is more appropriate in view of what follows which tells of her coming before the Lord to pray.

**sat upon.** Better 'was sitting upon.'

**the temple.** Hebr. *Hēkāl*, which shows that there was a permanent building in Shiloh (cp. iii. 3), not a tent as is implied in Ps. lxxviii. 60.

**11. I will give him,** etc. It was the custom in ancient Israel for a priest not to cut the hair.

**13. Hannah.** The LXX rightly omits.

**15. of a sorrowful spirit.** Hebr. 'a stubborn spirit'; the text is clearly wrong; emended on the basis of the LXX the Hebrew would be lit. 'hard of day,' i.e. in unfortunate circumstances.

**16. daughter of Belial.** Cp. 'sons of Belial,' ii. 12, x. 27. Belial is not a proper name, but means 'worthlessness'; a daughter of Belial means, therefore, a 'worthless woman.'

and said, Go in peace : and the God of Israel grant  
 18 thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said,  
 Let thy servant find grace in thy sight. So the woman  
 went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no  
 19 more *sad*. And they rose up in the morning early, and  
 worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to  
 their house to Ramah : and Elkanah knew Hannah his  
 20 wife ; and the LORD remembered her. And it came to  
 pass, when the time was come about, that Hannah conceived,  
 and bare a son ; and she called his name Samuel,  
 21 *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD. And  
 the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer  
 22 unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But

**17. the God of Israel.** The early Israelites believed in the existence of other gods (cp. 1 Kgs. xi. 33, Ps. lxxxvi. 8), but there was only one God of the race of Israel.

**18. and did eat.** The LXX reads : 'And entered into her chamber and did eat with her husband and did drink.' This reflects a better text of the Hebrew than the present text of the Hebrew Bible ; but 'her chamber' is a mistake for 'the chamber' ; the reference is to the chamber close to the temple of the Lord in which the worshippers partook of the sacrificial meal, cp. ix. 22.

**20. when the time was come about.** Lit. 'at the circuit (i.e. completion) of the days,' cp. Exod. xxxiv. 22 'at the circuit of the year.'

**Samuel.** The meaning of this name is 'Name of God' ; cp. Peniel, 'Face of God' (Gen. xxxii. 31, etc.), and Reuel (Gen. xxxvi. 4, etc.), which are similarly formed. A.V. marg. explains it, wrongly, as meaning 'Asked of God,' as though it were derived from the same root as the Hebrew word for 'to ask,' which occurs in the words which follow ('Because *I have asked him* of the Lord'). But similarity of sound, not etymology, was the Hebrew writer's object in placing the words close together, viz. *Shēmuel* (= 'Samuel'), and *Shēi'tiv* (= 'I have asked him') ; this device occurs very often in the Hebrew O.T.

**21. all his house.** I.e. all his family or household ; cp. Gen. vii. 1, xii. 1, etc.

**the yearly sacrifice.** Lit. 'the sacrifice of the days' ; cp. xx. 6, where an annual family sacrifice is also spoken of.



Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said 23 unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman tarried and gave her son suck, until she weaned him.

i. 24-ii. 11. *Samuel is dedicated to the Lord. Hannah's song of praise and thanksgiving.*

And when she had weaned him, she took him up with 24 her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they 25 slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And 26

**22. until the child be weaned.** In the East children are weaned much later than in western lands, so that when Hannah took Samuel up to Shiloh in order to leave him there permanently he might well have been three, or even four, years old, which in the East would be old enough for a boy to be left without the mother's care.

**before.** Better 'in the presence of'; cp. ii. 11; Ps. xvi. 11 ('in thy presence is fulness of joy').

**23. establish his word.** The LXX and Pesh. read, '...thy word'; this is more correct as the reference is to Hannah's promise to dedicate her son to the Lord (see *vv.* 11, 22); the meaning is, 'may the Lord make thy word, or undertaking, effective.'

**24. with three bullocks.** Read with the LXX and Pesh. 'with a bullock of three years old' (cp. *v.* 25, 'and they slew the bullock'). The LXX adds, 'and bread,' cp. Exod. xxix. 23.

**one ephah.** The word is probably of Egyptian origin. It was a dry measure, the corresponding liquid measure being the *bath* (see Ezek. xlv. 11), which contained eight gallons approximately.

**in Shiloh.** Better 'to Shiloh.'

**25. they slew the bullock.** The subject of 'they' is not Elkanah and Hannah, but, as Wellhausen has pointed out, the *Shōhādā'im*, i.e. men whose special duty it was to slaughter

she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the  
 27 LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath  
 28 given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore I also have granted him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he is granted to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

2 And Hannah prayed and said:

My heart exulteth in the LORD,

Mine horn is exalted in the LORD:

My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;

the animals brought for sacrifice. These slaughterers were uncircumcized foreigners; but in later times the office was often filled by Levites.

26. **that stood by thee here, praying**, etc. Standing was the usual attitude during prayer; cp. 1 Kings viii. 22.

27. **For**. Better 'Concerning.'

28. **as long as he liveth**. Lit. 'all the days for which he shall have been'; the R.V. rightly follows the LXX and Pesh., not the Hebrew.

**And he worshipped the Lord there**. The Hebr. text is corrupt; read with the LXX: 'And she left him there before the Lord.'

ii. 1-10. With the whole of this song cp. the *Magnificat* (Lk. i. 46-53). The song is a later insertion; its content shows that it is in reality quite inappropriate here; the one point of contact with the story of Hannah is contained in v. 5 ('Yea, the barren hath borne seven'), which was evidently the cause of its insertion. Moreover, it breaks the continuity of the narrative, for v. 11 follows naturally after i. 28.

1. **Mine horn is exalted**. Cp. Ps. lxxxix. 17, 24, cxii. 9, cxlviii. 14; 'horn' here is used figuratively of 'power'; the figure was taken from the wild-ox holding up its head in conscious strength, e.g. in the oracle of Balaam it is said: 'He hath, as it were, the horns (i.e. the strength) of the wild-ox' (Num. xxiii. 22); and cp. v. 10 where 'strength' and 'horn' are parallel. See also Jer. xlviii. 25, 'The horn of Moab is cut off,' cp. Job xvi. 15. 'Horn' is also used as a symbol of victory, see 1 Kgs. xxii. 11; cp. also the expression 'horn of salvation' in Lk. i. 69.

**My mouth is enlarged**. The meaning of this expression is well brought out by the words of Ps. xxxv. 21: 'Yea, they

Because I rejoice in thy salvation.  
 There is none holy as the LORD ; 2  
 For there is none beside thee :  
 Neither is there any rock like our God.  
 Talk no more so exceeding proudly ; 3  
 Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth :  
 For the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
 And by him actions are weighed.  
 The bows of the mighty men are broken, 4  
 And they that stumbled are girded with strength.  
 They that were full have hired out themselves for 5  
 bread ;  
 And they that were hungry have ceased :  
 Yea, the barren hath borne seven ;  
 And she that hath many children languisheth.  
 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive : 6  
 He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.  
 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich : 7  
 He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.  
 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, 8

opened their mouth wide against me; they said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.'

**2. rock like our God.** For the idea of a rock as a symbol for God see Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 37; Ps. xviii. 31; Is. xlv. 8; Hab. i. 12.

**3. And by him...are weighed.** This, not R.V. marg. ('though actions be not weighed'), is what should be read. The meaning is that God who knows all things can estimate actions at their true value because He sees their motives, cp. Prov. xxi. 2, xxiv. 12, and the expression 'heart-discerner,' Acts xv. 8.

**5. have ceased.** A slight emendation of the text affords the better reading 'have ceased to toil,' i.e. those who in spite of their incessant labour still hungered, have sufficient, so that they need toil no more.

**6. the grave.** Lit. *Shöl*, the place, conceived of as deep down in the earth, where the shades (*Rephaim*) of the departed abode in darkness and silence and forgetfulness; the dead merely existed here without knowledge or feeling.

**8. He raiseth up, etc.** The first three lines of this verse are repeated in Ps. cxiii. 7, 8.

- He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,  
 To make them sit with princes,  
 And inherit the throne of glory :  
 For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S,  
 And he hath set the world upon them.
- 9 He will keep the feet of his holy ones,  
 But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness;  
 For by strength shall no man prevail.
- 10 They that strive with the LORD shall be broken to  
 pieces ;  
 Against them shall he thunder in heaven :  
 The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth ;  
 And he shall give strength unto his king,  
 And exalt the horn of his anointed.

**He lifteth up...dunghill.** In an Arab encampment slaves sleep beside the refuse and the dung.

**For the pillars,** etc. Cp. Job xxxviii. 4-6; Ps. xxiv. 2, cii. 25, civ. 5. The ancient Hebrews conceived of the earth as a comparatively small flat surface, round in shape, and supported partly upon the immense abyss of waters underneath, and partly upon pillars which were founded still further below, cp. Ps. xxiv. 2, 'He hath founded it upon the seas...', cxxxvi. 6 'To him that spread forth the earth upon the waters'; Ps. lxxv. 3, 'I have set up the pillars of it' (i.e. the earth); Ps. xviii. 15, 'then the channels of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare.'

**9. his holy ones.** Hebr. *Ḥasīdīm*, i.e. those who are the loyal observers of the Law of God, the exact contrary to the 'wicked' mentioned in the following line.

**shall be put to silence in darkness.** I.e. in *Shēōl*, see note on v. 6.

**10. They that strive...to pieces.** The LXX lit. 'the Lord will make weak his adversary'; this reading is perhaps to be preferred, as 'the Lord' is the subject in the rest of the verse; it involves a very slight change in the Hebrew. After this line the LXX adds seven lines taken from Jer. ix. 23, 24.

**And he shall,** etc. Better 'That he may,' etc.

**his king...his anointed.** These words must clearly have been written after the establishment of the monarchy; the mention of 'his anointed' (Hebr. 'his Messiah') makes it probable that the passage belongs to a period considerably later than the beginning of the monarchy.

And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the 11 child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

ii. 12-17. *The wickedness of the sons of Eli.*

Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew 12 not the LORD. And the custom of the priests with the 13 people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; and he 14 struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took therewith. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Yea, before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant 15

11. This verse belongs immediately after the words, 'And she left him there before the Lord' (see the note above on i. 28). For 'Elkanah went' the LXX<sup>B</sup> reads, 'she went.'

**did minister.** Better 'was ministering,' i.e. during the time which is now about to be dealt with.

13. **And the custom...was.** These words should be read with what precedes, so that, following the LXX, Pesh. Vulg., we must read: 'They knew not the Lord, nor what was the right (i.e. the rightful due) of the priest from the people when any man was offering sacrifice, for the priest's servant came...'. What follows describes, therefore, an abuse of what was the priest's lawful dues. What was lawful is stated in Deut. xviii. 3, 'And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, that they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.' See, however, the note on v. 15.

**a fleshhook of three teeth.** Lit. 'the prong, the three teeth,' i.e. a three-pronged fork. Cp. Exod. xxvii. 3.

14. **pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot.** The two former were the larger vessels; the word *dūd*, translated 'kettle,' means a large jar; it is used in 2 Kgs. x. 7 of the receptacles into which the heads of the king's sons were placed, and translated 'basket' in the R.V.; this translation is not so wrong as appears at first sight, for even at the present day the peasants in Palestine construct a vessel called a *chawābi*, which is made of straw and clay, and is capable of holding water.

**therewith.** The LXX, Pesh. Vulg. read rightly 'for himself.'

15. **Yea, before they burnt,** etc. The 'Yea' implies 'Even more,' or the like, i.e. what follows in this and the next v.



came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest ; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if the man said unto him, They will surely burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth ; then he would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it me now : and if not, I will take it by force. And the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD : for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

ii. 18-21. *Samuel enters upon his sacred duties.*

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and

describes the climax of the wrong-doing of Eli's sons; but the fact must not be lost sight of that possibly they were contending for some ancient right.

**16. They will surely...presently.** Better, 'Let them burn the fat first'; in Hebr. 'Let them burn' is expressed in an emphatic way; it is the important part of the sentence.

**presently.** Lit. 'according to the day'; but it is an idiomatic expression meaning 'first'; see for another instance of its use, Gen. xxv. 31, 'And Jacob said, Sell me first (R.V. this day) thy birthright.'

**then he would say, Nay.** R.V. marg. 'he would say unto him, Thou...'; the text gives the right reading.

**17. the sin of, etc.** Their sin consisted in the fact that they took their portion before the sacrifice had been offered.

**for men abhorred.** R.V. marg. 'the men despised,' which is preferable; the 'men' refer to Eli's sons; cp. Num. xvi. 30.

**18. girded with a linen ephod.** This was the official garment of the priest; it is to be distinguished from the ephod mentioned in v. 28 (see the note there), xiv. 18, xxii. 18, xxiii. 9, xxx. 7; 'girded' means simply being dressed in, cp. Is. xv. 3, 'they gird themselves with sackcloth.'

**19. made.** The force of the Hebr. is 'used to make,' i.e. was in the habit of doing so.

**a little robe.** This robe, called *mē'îl*, was a long outer garment; cp. the high-priestly dress described in Exod. xxviii. 31.

said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which was lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD. 21

ii. 22-26. *Eli rebukes his sons for their wickedness.*

Now Eli was very old ; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people. Nay, my sons ; for it is no good report that I hear : ye make the LORD'S people to transgress. If one man sin against another, 25

**20. The Lord give thee seed.** Better, with the LXX, Vulg., 'The Lord recompense thee (with) seed.'

**which was lent.** The Hebr. text is probably not quite in order ; by a slight alteration we may render 'which she lent.'

**And they went...home.** This is the reading of the Pesh. and evidently right ; but the Hebr. reads, 'and they went to his place (home).'

**21. And the Lord,** etc. R.V. marg. has 'For the Lord' ; the text is right, following the LXX and Pesh.

**22. and how...meeting.** This is omitted by LXX<sup>B</sup> ; it is probably a later insertion based on Ex. xxxviii. 8, which belongs to the 'Priestly Code.'

**the tent of meeting.** The sanctuary at Shiloh is elsewhere in chaps. i.-iii. spoken of as a temple (*Hēkāl*) ; the 'tent of meeting' is a technical term for the Tabernacle in the 'Priestly Code,' which belongs to a much later time than 1 Sam.

**23. Why do ye...people.** The Hebr. text is not in order, read with the LXX, 'Why do ye according to these things (concerning) which I hear from all the people?'

**24. that I hear...transgress.** Read as in R.V. marg. 'which I do hear the Lord's people do spread abroad,' this is preferable.

**25. If one man sin against...for him.** Better, 'If a man sin against a man, God will mediate for him ; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who can intercede for him?' The teaching of this passage, viz. that there is no mediator nor mediating element between God and men, is by no means always that of the O.T. ; see, further, the notes on vii. 5, 6.

God shall judge him : but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

ii. 27-36. *The prophecy of the downfall of the house of Eli.*

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I reveal myself unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt *in bondage*

**God shall judge him.** For *Elohim* ('God') used in the sense of a judge as the mouthpiece of a divine sentence, see Exod. xxi. 6, xxii. 7-9, and the R.V. marg. to these passages.

27-36. That this section is a later insertion is recognized by most of the more modern commentators, and for the following reasons: (1) the prophecy of the downfall of the house of Eli is described, in more logical sequence with what has preceded, in chap. iii. (see especially *vv.* 11 ff.), where it is the child Samuel, and not an indefinite 'man of God,' who announces God's doom; the section before us, therefore, anticipates the course of the history. (2) In *v.* 28 the centralization of worship in one national sanctuary (the temple at Jerusalem) is clearly pre-supposed; but this did not take place until about two centuries later. (3) In *v.* 35 the 'faithful priest,' whose house is to be 'made sure,' and who is to walk before the Lord's anointed 'for ever,' can only refer to the house of Zadok; the high-priesthood belonged to this house from the time of Solomon onwards. (4) In *v.* 36 the reference can only be to the time when, owing to the centralization of worship at Jerusalem and the consequent suppression of the local sanctuaries (*Bamôth*, or 'High-places'), the dispossessed priests were forced to come and offer their services at the central sanctuary. For other less important indications pointing to a later date for this section, see the notes.

**27. a man of God.** This expression is used of prophets in later books especially, e.g. 1 Kings xiii. 1, xvii. 18, 24.

**Did I reveal myself, etc.** An impassioned question intended to express God's wrath at the wickedness of the priestly house.

**when they were, etc.** The LXX reads, 'when they were in Egypt (as) bondservants to the house of Pharaoh.' It is probable that the word for 'bondservants' has dropped out of the Hebr. text; its insertion makes the sentence run more smoothly; cp. Lev. xxvi. 13; Deut. vi. 21.



to Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the 28 tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up unto mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? Wherefore kick ye at 29 my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in *my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Therefore the LORD, the 30 God of Israel, saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the

28. **did I choose him.** Better, 'did I choose it,' i.e. 'the house of thy father.'

**to wear an ephod.** Better, 'to bear the ephod'; the Hebr. word (*nasa'*) never means 'to wear.' The ephod here mentioned was an instrument used for divination (see xiv. 18 in the LXX, xxiii. 6-12, xxx. 7, 8; Hos. iii. 4, etc.; see also the note on Teraphim in xix. 13); one of the privileges of the priest was to carry the ephod, as the passage before us shows. When anyone desired to consult the ephod the priest brought it, and questions were asked before it (see xiv. 37, xxiii. 10-12, xxx. 8), and the reply was given by means of two lots, called respectively Urim and Thummim (=the Assyrian words *Urtu* and *Tamitu*, 'decision' and 'oracle'), see note on xiv. 41; these were probably placed inside the ephod, and the priest then drew out one, and framed his answer accordingly. The ephod was thus probably a kind of pouch. When, on the other hand, the ephod is spoken of as something that is standing upright (as in 1 Sam. xxi. 9) we must conjecture that an image (of Jehovah?) is meant, upon which, or behind which, the ephod was hung when not in use, and which therefore became identified with the ephod proper. The whole subject is, however, involved in much obscurity, which is increased by the fact that the derivation of the word ephod is quite unknown; see further McNeile's note in his *Exodus*, p. 182, paragraphs (b) and (c).

**offerings...made by fire.** Called *zebāhīm*, as distinct from the *minhā* or vegetable oblation.

29. **Wherefore kick ye, etc.** I.e. Why do ye despise....

**my people.** Read, with the LXX, 'before me'; i.e. the offerings which were offered 'before' Jehovah, and therefore belonged to Him and should have been sacrificed, were appropriated by the priests.

house of thy father, should walk before me for ever : but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me ; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall  
 31 be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that  
 32 there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt behold the affliction of *my* habitation, in all the wealth which *God* shall give Israel : and there shall not  
 33 be an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart : and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their  
 34 age. And this shall be the sign unto thee, that shall

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**30. walk before me.** 'To walk before Jehovah' means ordinarily to lead a godly life by keeping His commandments ; here it means to live under His care and providence, i.e. to be in prosperity.

**31. I will cut off,** etc. The sin of individuals affected the whole kin ; this is the normal O.T. doctrine. Cp. the sin of Achan (Josh. vii. 1, 11), which involves the nation's army in defeat, and the punishment of Achan's family with him.

**thine arm.** I.e. thy strength ; cp. Job xxii. 9 ; Ps. x. 15, lxxxiii. 8, R.V. marg.

**that there shall not be...house.** Omit, with the LXX, as almost the identical words occur in the next verse.

**33. and all the increase.** Better 'but all...'

**shall die in the flower,** etc. Read as R.V. marg. 'shall die by the sword of men' ; in the Hebr. text 'by the sword' has fallen out, but it must have been in the text used by the LXX translator. The meaning of this difficult verse, which continues the subject of the preceding verses (viz. the doom of the house of Eli), is best explained by the following paraphrase : "There is one man, however, belonging to thine house whom I will not cut off from mine altar, in order that his eyes may be consumed and his soul grieved" [the reference here is to Abiathar, who escaped the massacre of the priests at Nob (see xxii. 18-23), but was deposed from the priesthood by Solomon (see 1 Kings ii. 26, 27) because he had joined Adonijah in his attempt to secure the throne (see 1 Kings ii. 13-22) ; the words 'that his eyes may be consumed,' etc. refer to Abiathar's banishment to Anathoth (see 1 Kings ii. 26)] ; "but all the rest of those belonging to thine house shall die by the sword" [in reference to

come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas ; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise 35 me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind : and I will build him a sure house ; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass, that every one that 36 is left in thine house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.

iii. 1-18. *The downfall of the house of Eli revealed to Samuel ; at Eli's earnest request Samuel tells him all that had been revealed to him by the Lord ; Eli's resignation to the will of God.*

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before 3 Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days ; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at 2 that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, that he could not see,) and 3 the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*, in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was ; that the LORD called Samuel : and he 4

xxii. 18, 'And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and he slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did bear a linen ephod'].

34. in one day they shall die, etc. See iv. 11.

iii. 1. before Eli. I.e. under Eli's guidance.

precious. Better, as R.V. marg., 'rare'; cp. Is. xiii. 12.

open vision. Better, as R.V. marg., 'frequent'; lit. 'spread abroad,' i.e. among many. The 'vision' is the way whereby the 'word of the Lord' is communicated.

2. (now his eyes, etc.) The brackets should be continued to the words 'where the ark of God was.'

3. the lamp of God, etc. It is assumed that the lighting of the lamp in the Tabernacle was based on previous usage.

the ark of God. The ark became, in Israelite thought, inseparably connected with the presence of Jehovah (see Num.

5 said, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not ;  
 6 lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son ; lie down again.  
 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the  
 8 word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.  
 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down : and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD ; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down  
 10 in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said,

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x. 33, 35 ; Josh. iv. 6, 7 ; Judg. xx. 27, 28 ; 1 Sam. iv. 3, 7, 8, vii. 2 ; 2 Sam. vi. 13, 14, 17 ; 1 Kings viii. 5), and was thus virtually an image employed in Divine worship. It is significant that the only mention of the ark in the prophetic books is in Jer. iii. 16, where the prophet, after rebuking the people for their backsliding, says : 'And it shall come to pass in those days.. they shall say no more, "The ark of the covenant of the Lord" ; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more.' The prophet seems to have regarded the use of the ark as something antiquated, and unworthy of Israel.

4. **Samuel.** The LXX has 'Samuel, Samuel' ; cp. v. 10, 'as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.' For a similar way of address see Gen. xxii. 11, xlv. 2 ; Exod. iii. 4.

6. **And the Lord called,** etc. Read, with the LXX, 'And the Lord called yet again, Samuel, Samuel, and he went,' etc.

7. **did not yet know the Lord.** The expression is used here in a different sense from that of ii. 12 ; the context shows that in this case 'to know the Lord' is to be in personal communication with Him.

8. **that the Lord had called.** Better '...was calling.'

10. **the Lord came, and stood.** That the words are intended to express a visible, bodily appearance may be gathered from v. 15, where Samuel's experience is described as something that could be seen.



Speak ; for thy servant heareth. And the LORD said to 11 Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that 12 day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for 13 ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, 14 that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. And Samuel lay until the 15 morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli 16 called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that *the* 17 LORD hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from

11. **I will do.** Better 'I am about to do.'

12. If we are right in regarding ii. 27-36 (see above) as a later interpolation, the same must be said of this verse, since the words, 'All that I have spoken concerning his house,' can only be based on the aforementioned passage.

13. **I have told.** Read 'Thou shalt tell.' It is Samuel, not the Lord, who tells Eli about the impending doom ; see v. 18.

**for the iniquity which he knew.** Read, with the LXX, 'because of the iniquities of his sons.'

**because his sons did bring...themselves.** The Hebr. text is corrupt ; read, with the LXX, 'For his sons did speak evil of God.'

14. **shall not be purged with sacrifice.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'shall not be expiated' ; cp. xxvi. 19. It is worth noting that the atoning function belongs to *any* kind of sacrifice, according to these two passages ; i.e. the Levitical sin-offering, the special offering for the expiation of sin, is unknown.

15. **until the morning.** Add, with the LXX, 'and he rose up in the morning.'

**the vision.** I.e. something visible to the eye.

17. *the Lord.* This should not be expressed ; the point is that Eli intentionally avoids uttering the name of the God of Israel through holy awe. Read 'He hath spoken.'

me : God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he spake unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD : let him do what seemeth him good.

iii. 19-iv. 1a. *Samuel is established to be a prophet of the Lord.*

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did  
20 let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel  
from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was  
21 established to be a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD  
appeared again in Shiloh : for the LORD revealed himself  
4 to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the  
word of Samuel came to all Israel.

**God do so to thee**, etc. This formula occurs only in the books of Sam., Kings, Ruth. The words mean that God is invoked to bring a curse upon him if he does not say what Eli wishes him to, or if he keeps back anything; but what form the curse is to take is not specified; it is, as it were, left to God to decide this; cp. xx. 13; 2 Sam. iii. 35.

**19. and did let none...fall.** I.e. none of his words were without effect.

**20.** Logically this verse should come after v. 21; see below on iv. 1a.

**from Dan even to Beer-sheba.** A standing phrase denoting the whole land of Israel from north to south. Dan, the ancient name of which was Laish, has been identified with the modern Banias near the sources of the Jordan. Beersheba (the name means 'the well of seven') lay in the extreme south of Judah, on the border of the cultivated land; the country further south is mostly barren. The modern name is *Bir-es-Sheba*; it lies twenty-eight miles S.W. of Hebron.

**21. in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.** It is better to follow the LXX here, and omit these words, together with the following.

**iv. 1a. And the word...Israel.** These words are omitted in the LXX, probably rightly. This section runs more smoothly, and the sequence of thought is more logical, if read thus: 'And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And the Lord appeared again in

iv. 1b-vii. 1. *The Israelites are subjugated by the Philistines.*

iv. 1b-11. *Defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines,  
who capture the Ark.*

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array <sup>2</sup> against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was

Shiloh, for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.' The LXX adds: 'And Eli was very old; and his sons went about, and their way was evil before the Lord.' These words may quite possibly represent an original Hebrew text.

**1b. Now Israel, etc.** Before these words the LXX inserts: 'And it came to pass in those days that the strangers (= Philistines) were gathered together against Israel for war.' Some introductory words of this kind most likely stood in the Hebrew text originally. It is also more likely that the Philistines attacked the Israelites, than *vice versa* (as in the Hebrew), for the subsequent history shows that the Israelites were constantly being harassed by the Philistines; see vii. 7, xiii. 5-7, xxxi. 1-7. Moreover, in v. 2 the Philistines are represented as first attacking the Israelites.

**the Philistines.** Called in Hebrew *Pelishtim*; they occupied the maritime plain from Joppa (or near it) in the north, to the desert of Gaza in the south, a distance of about forty miles; the extent of the land from west to east varied at different times according as the Philistine or Israelite power preponderated. The name 'Palestine' was first applied to Philistia by the Greeks; later on, however, it was used in the extended sense to include the whole of Judæa; it was not until Christian times that the entire Holy Land was included under this name.

**Eben-ezer.** 'The stone of help,' cp. v. 1. This Eben-ezer lay near Aphek, as the text says, which was situated in the northern part of the plain of Sharon. It is a different Eben-ezer that is spoken of in vii. 12, which was near Mizpah in the Benjamite territory, lying therefore more to the south. That so appropriate a name should have been given to more than one stone is very natural.

**2. they joined battle.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'the battle was spread.'

smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army  
 3 in the field about four thousand men. And when the  
 people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said,  
 Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the  
 Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the  
 LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that it may come among us,  
 4 and save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the  
 people sent to Shiloh, and they brought from thence the  
 ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which sitteth  
 upon the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and  
 Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

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**the army.** Better 'array,' as in R.V. marg. It could only be used in reference to a host in good order; the implication is that the four thousand who were slain fell while fighting, not while in flight. The battle took place 'in the field,' i.e. in the plain, which gave the Philistines, with their superior arms, a great advantage. It was different when, later on, the Philistines attacked the Israelites in the hill-country around Mizpah (see vii. 5-14); here the advantage lay with the Israelites, who were accustomed to the more mountainous land.

**3. the elders of Israel.** They were the heads of clans; they not only led their followers in battle (cp. Judg. xi. 4-11), but were also counsellors in time of peace, and administered the affairs of the people generally (see Num. xi. 16-17, 24-25).

**Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us?** I.e. why has the Lord suffered us to be defeated; the idea is, not that the Lord had utilised the Philistines in order to smite His people, but rather that He had refrained from intervening, and thus saving them from their enemies. Hence the people think that by bringing the ark, with which the presence of Jehovah was inseparably connected (see note on iii. 3), into the battle, they will be able to compel Jehovah, as it were, to assert His power on their behalf.

**the ark of the covenant of the Lord.** In this *v.*, as well as in *vv.* 4, 5, the LXX omits 'the covenant' (cp. *vv.* 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22; see also LXX of Josh. iii. 11, 14); the omission is correct, as the expression 'the ark of the covenant of Jehovah' belongs to a later time; 'the covenant' was introduced here into the text at a time when the fuller form of the expression was in more general use.

**4. and the two sons...were there with,** etc. The LXX and Vulg. rightly omit the word 'there.'



And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into 5  
 the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that  
 the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard 6  
 the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise  
 of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And  
 they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into  
 the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, 7  
 God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto  
 us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.  
 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of 8  
 these mighty gods? these are the gods that smote the  
 Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness.  
 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, 9  
 that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have  
 been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. And 10  
 the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they

5. **rang again.** Cp. 1 Kings i. 45; the Hebrew word occurs also in Ruth i. 19, where the R.V. renders, '(and the city) was moved.'

6. **the Hebrews.** Cp. xiv. 11, xxix. 3, where the Philistines also speak of the Israelites as 'the Hebrews.' The word '*ēber*, from which the name 'Hebrew' *apparently* comes, means 'the other side,' or 'across'; and a 'Hebrew' has frequently been explained as one who came 'from the other side' of the river (i.e. the Euphrates), see Josh. xxiv. 2, 3; Isa. vii. 20; the reference being to Haran (Gen. xi. 31) in Aram-naharaim, the home of Abraham and Nahor (Gen. xxiv. 4, 7, 10), which lay beyond the Euphrates. But the derivation is not quite certain.

7. **God is come.** The LXX rightly adds 'unto them.'

8. **these mighty gods.** The Philistines who worshipped various gods naturally thought that the Israelites did likewise. **plagues in the wilderness.** But the slaughter of the Egyptians did not take place in the wilderness; the words should probably be read, 'smiting and plague.'

9. **that ye be not servants, etc.** The subjection to the Philistines is referred to in Judg. xiii. 1, 'And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.'

fled every man to his tent : and there was a very great slaughter ; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.  
 11 And the ark of God was taken ; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

iv. 12-18. *The death of Eli.*

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and  
 13 with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon his seat by the way side watching : for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came

11. **And the ark of God was taken.** Cp. 2 Sam. v. 20, 21, where the Philistines, having been defeated at Baal-perazim, 'left their images there, and David and his men took them away.'

12. **with his clothes rent, and with earth,** etc. The rending of the clothes as a sign of mourning, which is still done, though in a modified way, by Arabs and orthodox Jews, is probably the remnant of a more ancient custom, according to which mourners offered parts of their clothing as a sacrifice to the dead ; a man's clothes were regarded almost as part of himself, so that the offering of them served as a means of personal connexion between the mourner and the departed dead. The putting of earth, or 'ashes,' on the head, as another sign of mourning, may possibly be merely a token of self-humiliation ; but it is more probably another instance of the remains of an ancient custom, according to which the dust which was strewn upon the head was taken from the grave, and the ashes from the funeral fires (2 Chron. xvi. 14, xxi. 19) ; so Robertson Smith. Kautzsch, on the other hand, thinks that these customs may have been acts of disfigurement so that the spirits of the dead should not recognize and injure the mourners (Hastings' *D.B.*, extra vol. p. 614). But not *all* the spirits of the departed were regarded as malignant.

13. **sat upon his seat.** Cp. i. 9.

**by the way side watching.** Read with R.V. marg., following the LXX, 'beside the gate, watching the way' (cp. Nah. ii. 2, 'watch the way'). See v. 18, where it is said that he fell 'by the side of the gate.'

**for his heart trembled for the ark of God.** Contrast with this the confidence displayed by the people at the sight of the ark ; see v. 5.

into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when 14  
 Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth  
 the noise of this tumult? And the man hasted, and came  
 and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; 15  
 and his eyes were set, that he could not see. And the 16  
 man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army,  
 and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How  
 went the matter, my son? And he that brought the 17  
 tidings answered and said, Israel is fled before the Phil-  
 istines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among  
 the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas,  
 are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to 18  
 pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell  
 from off his seat backward by the side of the gate, and  
 his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and  
 heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

iv. 19-22. *The birth of Ichabod.*

And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, 19  
 near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings  
 that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in  
 law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and

14. the noise of this tumult. Cp. Isa. xxxiii. 3.

16. I am he that came. Better '...that is come.' Eli, as  
 v. 13 shows, was awaiting the arrival of such a messenger.

17. Note how each item of news which the messenger  
 reports describes the extent of the disaster in an ascending  
 scale; the climax is reached with the news that the ark has  
 been captured.

18. when he made mention, etc. The loss of the ark  
 implied that Jehovah's presence among His people was with-  
 drawn (see note on iii. 3); this blow Eli could not survive.

And he had judged Israel forty years. The LXX has  
 'twenty years'; but it is probable that the whole sentence is  
 not original. Eli is nowhere else spoken of as a 'judge'; he  
 is 'Eli the priest' (i. 9), and his duties are never spoken of as  
 those of a 'judge.'

- 20 brought forth; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast brought forth a son.  
 21 But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken,  
 22 and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.

v. 1-12. *The sojourn of the Ark among the Philistines, and the sufferings of the Philistines in consequence.*

vv. 1-5. *The Ark in Dagon's temple.*

- 5 Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and  
 2 they brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. And the

**20. about the time of her death.** I.e. when she was about to die; cp. the case of Rachel in Gen. xxxv. 18.

**for thou hast brought forth a son.** The greatest happiness that could befall an Israelite woman; contrast Hannah's grief at not having a son (i. 8).

**But she answered not,** etc. As the next verse shows, the reason for this is her overwhelming grief at the loss of the ark; the sorrow for the death of Eli and her husband is secondary.

**21. Ichabod.** Cp. xiv. 3. 'No glory,' or according to a slight emendation of the Hebrew text 'Alas for the glory'; in any case the 'glory' is not the glory of Israel, as might be inferred from the words which follow, but the divine glory, which has departed with the capture of the ark.

**is departed.** The Hebrew implies more, 'is gone into exile,' it is the same word used, e.g. in Is. v. 13, 'therefore my people are gone into captivity.'

**22.** This is a repetition of part of the preceding verse, and is probably not original.

**v. 1. Ashdod.** Cp. Josh. xiii. 3; one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, and the most important of them; the others were: Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. They were all independent, owning in each case the surrounding territory with its cities and villages (see vi. 17, 18), but were joined, by common interests, into a confederacy. Ashdod was situated nearly three miles from the coast, about midway between Joppa and Gaza; on its site there stands to-day the little village of Esdūd in a commanding and beautiful position.

Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they 3 of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow 4 morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *lay* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump* of Dagon was left to him.

**2. the house of Dagon.** 'Beth-Dagon,' i.e. the temple of Dagon, cp. Judg. xvi. 23; 1 Macc. x. 83, 84, xi. 4; there were other places which took their name from the temple of this god, and were called Beth-Dagon, see Josh. xv. 41, xix. 27; another (probably to be identified with the 'house of Dagon' referred to in the text), according to an inscription of Sennacherib, was situated near Joppa; while a Beit Degan (= Beth-Dagon) is still in existence near Nablous, as well as a Dagun near Jamnia. The worship of Dagon must, therefore, have been comparatively widespread at one time. It is probable that Dagon was, originally at all events, an agricultural god (*dāgān* means 'grain,' cp. vi. 4, 5), rather than a fish-god, deriving the name from *dāg*, 'fish'; see, further, the note on v. 4.

**3. on the morrow.** Add, with the LXX, 'they came to the house of Dagon and looked'; the object of their arising early in the morning was to come and see whether anything had happened through the presence of the ark.

**upon his face.** This, according to the LXX, is the right rendering; the R.V. marg. ('before it') which is translated from the (here corrupt) Hebrew text, can be disregarded.

**before the ark of the Lord.** Hitherto the expression has always been 'the ark of God'; the name of Jehovah (= 'the Lord') is mentioned here in order to emphasize the fact that it is *Israel's* (cp. v. 7) God before whom the Philistines' god is humbled.

**4. the palms of his hands.** Simply the hands are meant; this redundant expression occurs again in 2 Kgs. ix. 35.

**only the stump of Dagon was left to him.** The Hebr. text, which is corrupt, reads 'only Dagon was left upon him'; the LXX has 'only the back of Dagon was left,' which shows that a word has fallen out of the Hebrew text. An old Rabbinic commentator, David Kimchi, renders 'only the form of a fish



5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, unto this day.

*vv. 6-12. The Ark among the Philistines.*

6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with  
7 tumours, even Ashdod and the borders thereof. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said,

was left' (see note on v. 2), and explains by saying: 'It is said that Dagon, from his navel down, had the form of a fish (whence his name, Dagon), and from his navel up, the form of a man, as it is said, his two hands were cut off.' It is possible that the Philistines who lived near the sea turned the ancient agricultural god into a fish-god owing to the similarity of his name with the word for 'fish' (*dāg*). In so far Kimchi's comment may be based on fact.

**5. Therefore neither the priests...tread on the threshold, etc.** The real reason why the ancient Israelites, in common with most Semitic peoples, avoided stepping on the threshold was because it was believed that malicious spirits lowered about here, and by leaping over the threshold the danger of falling into the power of these was escaped. Somewhat analogous to this is another Semitic custom, viz. the threshold sacrifice, which was offered to propitiate the spirits, who were the lords of the soil, whenever a new dwelling was fixed upon; this applies also to the pitching of a tent on a new site. The custom is widespread at the present day in Syria and Palestine.

**unto this day.** The LXX adds: 'for they leap over'; it is not certain whether this represents part of an original Hebrew text, or whether it is intended to be an explanatory note taken from Zeph. i. 9, 'And in that day I will punish all those that leap over the threshold.'

**6. tumours.** The R.V. marg. reads better 'plague boils,' see Deut. xxviii. 27, and the marginal note there.

**even Ashdod...thereof.** As the R.V. marg. points out, the LXX has instead of this the following, 'and in the midst of the land thereof mice were brought forth, and there was a great and deadly destruction in the city'; this is probably a later alteration, cp. note on vi. 1.

**the borders thereof.** By the 'borders' are meant the smaller cities and villages in the surrounding territory which were dependent upon the chief city (see vi. 18).

The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us : for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the 8 Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*. And it was so, that, after they had carried it 9 about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great discomfiture : and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and tumours brake out upon them. So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it 10 came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. They sent therefore and gathered together all 11 the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own

**8. the lords of the Philistines.** The word for 'lord' (*seren*) means 'tyrant'; it is only used in reference to the Philistines (cp. Josh. xiii. 3; Judg. iii. 3, xvi. 5 etc.), and is therefore evidently a native name.

**Gath.** The modern *Tell es-safi*, situated above the entrance to the valley of Elah on a hill 200 ft. high, steep on all sides.

**about thither.** Omit 'thither'; the LXX rightly adds 'to Gath.'

**10. Ekron.** The modern '*Akir*'; the most northerly of the five chief Philistine cities; it lay nearest of them all to the territory of the Israelites. Beth-shemesh was less than twelve miles distant.

**the Ekronites cried out,** etc. The havoc wrought by the presence of the ark in Ashdod and Gath had become known all over the country.

**to us.** Hebr. 'to me,' spoken in the name of the people of the city.

**to slay us and our people.** It is the rulers of the city who are speaking.

**11.** At the end of this verse the LXX adds, 'since the ark of the God of Israel had entered there'; it is quite possible that these words represent something in the original text.

place, that it slay us not, and our people : for there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city ; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the tumours : and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

**vi. 1-vii. 1.** *The Philistines send the Ark of God out of their land.*

**vi. 1-16.** *The Ark is brought to Beth-shemesh.*

**6** And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the  
**2** Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? shew us wherewith we shall  
**3** send it to its place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty ; but in any wise return him a guilt offering : then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed

**vi. 1. in the country.** Lit. 'in the field,' in reference to the plain-land of Philistia.

**2. the priests and the diviners.** Originally there was no difference between these two ; the priest was a 'diviner,' i.e. he knew how to use the oracle, and thereby to become acquainted with the divine will. In later days the priest's main duty was to offer sacrifice, while the diviner was looked upon as an imposter (cp. Is. xlv. 25 ; Mic. iii. 11 ; Jer. xxvii. 9, 10, xxix. 8 ; Ezek. xiii. 9, xxii. 28). The Hebr. root from which the word translated 'diviner' comes, means 'to practise divination,' i.e. to consult the oracle.

**What shall we do with the ark?** The question is not as to whether the ark was to be sent away ; that had already been settled ; but in what manner, with what offering,—as the context shows.

**3. send it not empty.** This does not mean that anything is to be placed inside the ark, see *v.* 8, but that it is to be accompanied by an offering. Cp. Exod. xxiii. 15.

**return.** I.e. 'render as a due,' see Num. v. 7.

**a guilt offering.** Hebr. *'āshām* ; it means here something offered as a compensation to one who has been wronged.

**and it shall be known to you, etc.** I.e. you will then know why you are now suffering ; by which is meant, when you see



from you. Then said they, What shall be the guilt offer- 4  
 ing which we shall return to him? And they said, Five  
 golden tumours, and five golden mice, *according to* the  
 number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague  
 was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall 5  
 make images of your tumours, and images of your mice  
 that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God  
 of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off  
 you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.  
 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Eryp- 6  
 tians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had  
 wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the  
 people go, and they departed? Now therefore take and 7  
 prepare you a new cart, and two milch kine, on which  
 there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart,  
 and bring their calves home from them: and take the 8

that as a result of offering compensation your suffering ceases, then you will realise that you were suffering because you had wronged the God of Israel in taking His ark from its own place.

4. **on you all.** So LXX, Pesh.; the Hebrew wrongly reads 'on them all.'

5. **ye shall make images of your tumours, and,** etc. Render: '...of your tumours, even...'; there was only one set of images, see note above.

6. **when he had wrought wonderfully,** etc. Better, as R.V. marg., 'made a mock of,' see Exod. x. 2 (R.V. marg.); Num. xxii. 29. The sentence may be rendered thus: 'Was it not so, when He made a mock of them?—then they let them go, and they (i.e. the people) departed'; cp. Exod. xii. 30 ff.

7. **take and prepare.** The addition of 'take' is the Hebrew way of making the narrative more graphic, cp. a similar use of the verb in Gen. ii. 15, xxvii. 14.

**a new cart, and two milch kine,** etc. It would have been regarded as a profane act to employ anything in the service of God which had previously been in use among men, cp. 2 Sam. vi. 3, and see, for the same idea, Mk. xi. 2; Lk. xxiii. 53.

**and bring their calves,** etc. Nothing must be permitted to distract the kine from what they are about to do, viz. to act as the medium for declaring the divine will; cp. Num. xxii. 21 ff.

ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart ; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a guilt offering, in a coffer by the side thereof ; and send it away, that it  
 9 may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of its own border to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil : but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us ; it was a chance that happened to us.  
 10 And the men did so ; and took two milch kine, and tied  
 11 them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home : and they put the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their tumours.  
 12 And the kine took the straight way by the way to Beth-shemesh ; they went along the high way, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left ; and the lords of the Philistines went after them  
 13 unto the border of Beth-shemesh. And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley :

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for the idea of an animal acting as God's instrument for indicating His will.

**9. the way of its own border.** I.e. in the direction of the place where it belongs.

**Beth-shemesh.** 'The house (or 'temple') of the sun'; cp. Josh. xv. 10; it is called '*Ir-Shemesh*, 'the city of the sun,' in Josh. xix. 41. The modern '*Ain Shems*, fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, on the southern slope of the *Wady es-Surar*, lying 917 feet above the sea-level, marks the ancient site of the city.

**but if not...that happened to us.** The natural impulse of the milch kine would be to return home to their calves, so that if they went in the opposite direction towards the Israelite border it would be an infallible sign that a higher power was directing them.

**12. the high way.** R.V. marg. 'Heb. one raised way'; the 'one' is emphatic. The 'raised way' was an artificially constructed high-road; cp. Is. xl. 3, where the word means a highway, built up through the wilderness, for the exiles to use in returning from captivity.

**lowing as they went.** Implying that they felt the loss of their calves.

**and turned not aside, etc.** This is a rhetorical addition to heighten the effect and to emphasize the fact that the kine instinctively felt themselves impelled by an irresistible power.

and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came into the field of 14 Joshua the Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, 15 and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And when the five 16 lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

vi. 17-vii. 1. *The death of many of the men of Beth-shemesh.*

And these are the golden tumours which the Philistines 17

13. and rejoiced to see it. Read, on the basis of the LXX rendering, 'rejoiced to meet it' (cp. the same words in Judg. xix. 3), i.e. they rejoiced as they went to meet it.

14. a great stone. Cp. xiv. 33; 2 Sam. xx. 8. Originally a holy stone and an altar were the same thing; this is clear from Exod. xx. 24, 25, '...if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.' Presumably, therefore, this 'great stone' by which the kine stopped was a holy stone. The fact that the kine came and stood by this stone-altar of their own accord suggests the implication that they instinctively knew that they were fulfilling the divine intention by doing so, i.e. that they had been assigned by God for the sacrifice which was now to take place; with this cp. Gen. xxii. 8, where Abraham says God will Himself provide the sacrifice, and v. 13, where the ram presents itself unsought as an offering.

15. This verse is obviously a later insertion, both because it largely repeats the preceding one, and also on account of the mention of the Levites. In later times it was the Levites alone whose duty it was to attend to the ark; since they were not mentioned in v. 14, it was deemed fitting to insert the mention of them here in order to bring the passage more into agreement with the usage which had in the meantime come into vogue.

17. This verse, and v. 18 down to 'country villages,' is an

returned for a guilt offering unto the LORD ; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one,  
 18 for Ekron one ; and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities and of country villages : even unto the great stone, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD, *which stone remaineth* unto  
 19 this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people seventy men, *and* fifty thousand men : and the people mourned, because the LORD had smitten the

explanation added at a later date ; the details given would have been unnecessary at a time when they were all very familiar to the Israelites.

**18. even unto.** The Hebr. is wrongly vocalised ; read with the LXX, 'and the witness is...' ; cp. Gen. xxxi. 52.

**the great stone.** This is the (correct) reading of the LXX and the Targum ; as the R.V. marg. points out, 'the Hebrew text has *Abel* (that is a meadow).'

**in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.** These words are also probably a later addition. The passage beginning at v. 16 may be, therefore, read as follows : 'And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day. And the witness (i.e. of what has been narrated) unto this day is the great stone whereon they set down the ark of the Lord.'

**19. And he smote...fifty thousand men.** The Hebr. text is corrupt in several particulars ; Wellhausen, on the basis of the LXX, emends the text so that it may be rendered : 'And the sons of Jechoniah were not unpunished, among the men of Beth-shemesh, because they gazed at the ark of the Lord ; and he smote among them (i.e. the sons of Jechoniah) seventy men' ; cp. Exod. xix. 21 ; Num. iv. 15, 20 ; 2 Sam. vi. 7. It is true the LXX reads 'seventy and fifty thousand men,' but the exaggeration is so obvious that this is clearly a mistake ; Josephus, in the *Antiquities*, has only 'seventy men.'

**because the Lord had smitten the people.** We should probably read 'them' (i.e. the sons of Jechoniah), as above, instead of 'the people' ; though the LXX agrees here with the Hebrew.

people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

**20. this holy God.** Cp. ii. 2; Ps. cxi. 11. To the Hebrews the conception of God's holiness contained also that of His separateness from men; hence the idea of seeing God was one which caused great fear; cp. e.g. Is. vi. 5: 'Woe is me...for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.'

**shall he go up from us.** The presence of Jehovah fills them with dread, so they desire to get rid of the ark, and with it the presence of Jehovah, as soon as possible. The right place for the ark is a sanctuary, so they send to the men of Kiriath-jearim to come and fetch it.

**21. Kiriath-jearim.** 'The city of forests,' one of the ancient Canaanite sanctuaries; its original name seems to have been Kiriath-Baal; see Josh. xv. 60. Its site is probably near the modern *Kuriet-el-'Enab*, a village on the high-road between Jaffa and Jerusalem, about nine miles from the latter.

**come ye down.** Kiriath-jearim lay higher up in the hill-country, and it was from the valley at the foot of Beth-shemesh that the messengers were sent.

**vii. 1. Abinadab.** The reason why it was thought fit to deposit the ark in the house of Abinadab is probably because it was the site of some ancient sanctuary; cp. 2 Sam. vi. 3, 4.

**in the hill.** R.V. marg. *Gibeah*, which means 'a hill.' Sanctuaries in ancient Israel were always situated on hills.

**sanctified.** I.e. he was set apart as the special guardian of the ark. The ritual of sanctification as given in Exod. xxix. 20 ff. is probably more elaborate than that of earlier times. It will be noticed that nothing is said about sacrifice; Eleazar's duty would be merely to look after the ark and to learn how to consult the oracle (see note on vi. 2).



## DIVISION II.

vii. 2-xv. 35. THE HISTORY OF SAMUEL AND SAUL.

vii. 2-17. *Samuel in Mizpah.*

vii. 2-4. *Samuel's exhortation to the people to serve only Jehovah, and to cease from idolatrous worship.*

2 And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after  
3 the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your heart, then put away the strange gods and the Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver

vii. 2. **lamented after the Lord.** R.V. marg. 'was drawn together' after, etc. The Hebr. word is difficult; but on the whole, it is perhaps best to follow the text as it stands; the meaning being that Israel 'sighed after' Jehovah; they longed for a reinstatement of the full worship of Jehovah, which had been impossible all these twenty years during which the ark had been left in an obscure sanctuary like Kiriath-jearim. The context shows that the worship of Jehovah had been neglected.

3. **Ashtaroath.** Cp. xxxi. 10. This is the plural form of Ashtoreth, and refers to the various types of this goddess worshipped in different localities. Ashtoreth is the same as Astarte, and equivalent to Ishtar of the Babylonians, Aphrodite of the Greeks, and Venus of the Romans. The name Ashtoreth must not be confused with Asherah, another goddess whose symbol (also called Asherah) was the sacred pole. On a cuneiform tablet recently found by Dr Sellin on the site of the ancient Taanach (in the plain of Esdraelon in the north of Palestine) the names of both these goddesses appear. In Gen. xiv. 5 a place called Ashteroth-Karnaim is mentioned (cp. Am. vi. 13), which means 'Ashtoreth of the two horns'; she was a goddess of the flocks and was therefore represented with two horns. During the recent excavations by Dr Macalister on the site of ancient Gezer (quite close to the Philistine border) a statuette of this goddess was found with two cow-horns.

**prepare your hearts unto,** etc. Better, with R.V. marg., 'direct your hearts unto'; cp. 2 Chron. xix. 3, xxx. 19.

you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children 4 of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

vii. 5-17. *Samuel gathers the people together to Mizpah. Israelite victory over the Philistines.*

And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I 5 will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered 6 together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged

4. **Baalim.** The plural form of Baal, which, like Ashtāroth, refers to the various forms of the god in different places; cp. e.g. Baal-Meon (Num. xxxii. 38), Baal-Hazor (2 Sam. xiii. 23), Baal-Tamar (Judg. xx. 33), etc.

5. **Mizpah.** Cp. Judg. xx. 1; also written Mizpeh; 'outlook-post.' There were at least six places of this name in Palestine, and their identification is not always certain. This Mizpah is probably to be identified with the modern *Nebi Samwil*, which is nearly 3000 feet above sea-level, and stands 500 feet above the surrounding plain. It is between four and five miles to the north-west of Jerusalem. The present name *Nebi Samwil* (the 'Prophet Samuel'), was given because, according to Moslem tradition, Samuel was buried there.

6. **and drew water, and poured,** etc. Cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17. Libations of water are not mentioned in the Law, and were apparently not known amongst the Israelites. It is possible that the reference here is to a rain-charm, in view of the impending attack of the Philistines which would be greatly impeded if rain were to pour down upon them while ascending the hill on which Mizpah stood. According to v. 10, this is actually what happened, the result being the discomfiture of the Philistines. In later times among the Jews rain-charms were used, though the rain was required for a different purpose. In the Mishna (*Sukka*, iv. 9) we are told that it was the custom during the Feast of Tabernacles, to draw water from the Pool of Siloam and solemnly pour it out upon the altar amid trumpet-blasts; this was done on each of the seven days of the Festival. The object of this rite was, according to the Rabbis themselves, to ensure sufficient rain during the coming season.

**judged.** Cp. v. 15. A 'judge' in the O.T. sense was to all intents and purposes a king; see 2 Sam. xv. 1-6; Am. ii. 3; Hos. vii. 7; Ps. ii. 10; and cp. also Judg. viii. 22 ff.



7 the children of Israel in Mizpah. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, 8 they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the 9 Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD answered 10 him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were 11 smitten down before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote 12 them, until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel

7. **they were afraid**, etc. The long period during which the Philistines had asserted their superiority had had the effect of cowing the Israelites.

8. **Cease not to cry...for us**. Lit. 'Be not deaf [by turning] from us so as not to cry unto Jehovah our God'; cp. a somewhat similar phrase in Ps. xxviii. 1.

9. **for a whole burnt offering**. Lit. 'as a burnt sacrifice, (even) a whole offering'; cp. Lev. vi. 15. Other instances of offering sacrifice on the eve of a battle are recorded in xiii. 10, Judg. vi. 20, 25, 26, xx. 26.

10. **they were smitten down before Israel**. The Israelites are represented as being silent spectators of what Jehovah was doing for them; it is not until the Philistines have been scattered that the Israelites take an active part; for such intervention on the part of Jehovah cp. Exod. xiv. 21 ff.; 2 Kings vi. 15 ff.

11. **under Beth-car**. 'Under' must refer either to the gates of Beth-car, or, more probably, to the base of a hill on which this place was situated. Beth-car does not occur elsewhere in the O.T., and is most likely a corruption of Beth-Haccerem (Jer. vi. 1; Neh. iii. 14; and Josh. xv. 59, where it is called Karem), which may be identified with the modern '*Ain Karim*' lying to the south of *Nebi Samwil* (see note on v. 5).

took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-czer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, 13 and they came no more within the border of Israel : and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines 14 had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath ; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged 15 Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to 16 year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpah ; and he judged Israel in all those places. And his return was 17 to Ramah, for there was his house ; and there he judged Israel : and he built there an altar unto the LORD.

**12. Shen.** 'A rock.' This is evidently a corruption, as we should expect the name of some locality corresponding to Mizpah ; the Syriac has Jashan, and the rendering of the LXX presupposes Jeshanah (cp. 2 Chron. xiii. 19) ; in Josephus, *Antiquities*, viii. xi. 3, it is called Jisanas ; so that it is probably this place which is meant ; it is identified with the modern '*Ain Sinije*, which lies about ten miles to the north of Mizpah.

**Hitherto hath**, etc. The Hebr. text is corrupt ; we should probably read 'It is (the) witness that Jehovah has helped us.'

**14. the Amorites.** The name of the earliest Semitic inhabitants of Canaan (see Am. ii. 9, 10) ; the Philistines are included under the general name.

**16. Beth-el.** The modern *Beitin*, twelve miles north of Jerusalem ; a different place from the Bethel mentioned in xxx. 27 ; cp. x. 3.

**Gilgal.** '(Stone) circle.' Five or six places of this name are mentioned in the O.T. ; this one is probably to be identified with the modern *Juleijil* (cp. Deut. xi. 30), near Mount Gerizim, and 2½ miles south-east of Shechem.

**in all those places.** Better 'near,' or 'by all...' ; cp. Judg. iii. 19, 'and all that stood *by* him' ; Judg. iv. 11, 'which is *by* Kedesh' ; in each case it is the same Hebrew preposition as here, which never means 'in.'

**17. And his return was to Ramah.** I.e. that was where he dwelt permanently (cp. i. 19). For Ramah, which means the 'Height,' see note on i. 1.

viii. 1-22. *The Israelites desire a king.*

viii. 1-3. *Samuel appoints his two sons to be judges.*

8 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he  
2 made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his  
firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah:  
3 they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked  
not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took  
bribes, and perverted judgement.

viii. 4-9. *The people ask for a king.*

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves to-  
5 gether, and came to Samuel unto Ramah: and they said  
unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in  
thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the  
6 nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they  
said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed  
7 unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel,  
Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say  
unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have  
8 rejected me, that I should not be king over them. Accord-  
ing to all the works which they have done since the day they

viii. 1. **over Israel.** 'Israel' consisted as yet of only a number of independent tribes; they did not form an united nation until the monarchy had been consolidated.

2. **Joel.** Cp. 1 Chron. vi. 28 (see R.V. marg.), 33.

**Abijah.** The corrupt form Abijam (cp. 1 Kings xiv. 31 and 2 Chron. xiii. 1) and the shortened form Abi (cp. 2 Kings xviii. 2 and 2 Chron. xxix. 1) also occur.

**Beer-sheba.** See note on iii. 20; cp. Am. v. 5, viii. 14. As this lay in the extreme south it is probable that Samuel's sons acted as judges only in this part of the country, for, according to xii. 1 ff., it was not until later that Samuel withdrew altogether from the judgeship.

7. **for they have not**, etc. 'Thee' and 'me' are placed in an emphatic position in the Hebrew; i.e. it is not *thee* that they have rejected, but *me*.

that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto 9 their voice : howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

viii. 10-22. *The consequences of having a king.*

And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the 10 people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will 11 be the manner of the king that shall reign over you : he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen ; and they shall run before his chariots : and he will appoint them unto him 12 for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties ; and *he*

8. **so do they also unto thee.** I.e. they act in the same ungrateful way unto thee.

10. **And Samuel told, etc.** With the verses that follow contrast what is said in Deut. xvii. 14-20, i.e. contrast the ideal with the actual fact.

11. **and appoint...for his chariots, and to be his horsemen.** Better 'and will place them for himself among his chariots and among his horsemen.'

**they shall run before, etc.** According to the custom of the bodyguard of an oriental king ; cp. 2 Sam. xv. 1 ; 1 Kings i. 5.

12. **captains of thousands.** A 'thousand' was the largest unit in the army of the Israelites when this had been organized by David in later years ; this unit was sub-divided into 'hundreds,' 'fifties,' and 'tens' (cp. xvii. 18, xxii. 7 ; 2 Kings i. 9 ff., xi. 4 ; see also 1 Macc. iii. 55). Although chariots are mentioned here, they were not actually introduced until the time of David (2 Sam. viii. 4), and Solomon was the first to use them as a regular part of the army organization (1 Kings ix. 19, x. 26 ; 2 Chron. i. 14). Neither horsemen nor chariots could have been of much use to the Israelites as long as their borders did not reach far beyond the mountainous part of the country ; it was only after David's conquests, when the borders of the land had been greatly extended, that the introduction of chariots

*will set some* to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments  
 13 of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be  
 14 confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And  
 he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your  
 oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his  
 15 servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and  
 of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his  
 16 servants. And he will take your menservants, and your  
 maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your  
 17 asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth  
 18 of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants. And ye  
 shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye  
 shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not answer  
 19 you in that day. But the people refused to hearken unto  
 the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will  
 20 have a king over us; that we also may be like all the  
 nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out  
 21 before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all  
 the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears  
 22 of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken  
 unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel  
 said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his  
 city.

and horsemen made it possible for the Israelites to fight on equal terms with the surrounding nations. See further the note on xvii. 18.

**13. confectionaries.** Read, with R.V. marg. 'perfumers'; cp. Exod. xxx. 25.

**16. young men.** After 'menservants' in the same verse (and cp. v. 11) one does not expect this reference to young men; read with R.V. marg., following the LXX, 'herds'; this accords better with 'your asses,' which follows.

**18. which ye shall have chosen you.** But it is Samuel himself, guided by the Lord, who, according to another account, chooses the king; see ix. 15 ff.



ix. 1-x. 16. *Samuel anoints Saul to be King.*

ix. 1-14. *Saul's first meeting with Samuel.*

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was **9**  
Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valour. And he had a son, whose name **2**  
was Saul, a young man and a goodly : and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he : from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. And the asses of Kish Saul's father were **3**  
lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And **4**  
he passed through the hill country of Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they found them not : then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they were not : and he passed through the land

**ix. 1. Kish.** The name occurs frequently in ancient Arabic literature as the name of a god, as well as of a tribe. It means, probably, the same as Baal, i.e. 'lord.'

**Abiel.** 'God is father'; cp. xiv. 51. It was also the name of one of David's thirty mighty men, 1 Chron. xi. 32.

**Zeror, Becorath, Aphiah.** These names do not occur elsewhere; their meanings are quite uncertain.

**a mighty man of valour.** Better '...of wealth'; see R.V. marg. Cp. 2 Kings xv. 20.

**2. Saul.** In Hebr. *Shāūl* ('asked for'), as in Gen. xxxvi. 37, xlv. 10 (R.V.; but A.V. Saul).

**a young man.** Better, as R.V. marg., 'a choice man.'

**from his shoulders...of the people.** The editor seems to have derived this description from x. 23.

**4.** The subject in this verse is sometimes 'he,' at other times 'they'; but it can scarcely be questioned that in all these cases the plural was designed throughout by the original writer.

**the land of Shalishah.** Cp. 2 Kings iv. 42. This district must have been situated close to 'Gibeah of Saul,' which lay  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Jerusalem.

**the land of Shaalim.** Probably a mistake for Shaalbim (cp. Josh. xix. 42; 2 Sam. xxiii. 32), in the territory of Dan, between Beth-shemesh and Aijalon.



5 of the Benjamites, but they found them not. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come and let us return ; lest my father  
 6 leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us. And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honour ; all that he saith cometh surely to pass : now let us go thither ; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey  
 7 whereon we go. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man ? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present  
 8 to bring to the man of God : what have we ? And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver : that will I  
 9 give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come and let us go to the seer : for he that is now  
 10 called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.) Then said Saul to his servant, Well said ; come, let us go. So

**5. the land of Zuph.** Cp. i. 1. The name of the land was evidently taken from that of the family of Zuph. The exact territory has not been identified, but Ramah must have been situated within it (see i. 1).

**6. in this city.** Though its name is not mentioned, the city was presumably Ramah.

**8. I have in my hand,** etc. The slave was probably carrying his master's money ; he is unlikely to have had any of his own.

**the fourth part of a shekel of silver.** The word shekel in Hebrew comes from a root meaning 'to weigh.' The value of a fourth part of a silver shekel would probably be about fourpence of our present money.

**that will I give.** Read, with the LXX, 'that do thou give.'

**to tell us our way.** I.e. concerning the object of their journey ; cp. v. 20.

**9.** An explanation by the editor, the proper place of which is evidently after v. 11, where 'seer' first occurs in the narrative.

they went unto the city where the man of God was. As they 11  
 went up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens  
 going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer  
 here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, 12  
*he is* before thee: make haste now, for he is come to-day  
 into the city; for the people have a sacrifice to-day in the  
 high place: as soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall 13  
 straightway find him, before he go up to the high place  
 to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because  
 he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that  
 be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for at this time  
 ye shall find him. And they went up to the city; *and* as 14  
 they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out  
 against them, for to go up to the high place.

**11. the ascent to the city.** This supports the probability that the city was Ramah (see notes on *v.* 6 and *vii.* 17), which means the 'Height.'

**12. behold, he is before thee...into the city.** Read, following the LXX, 'Behold, he is before you; now, just at this moment, he is come into the city.'

**the people have a sacrifice to-day in the high place.** It was not until the time of Hosea that the sacrifices offered on the *Bamôth*, or 'high places,' were forbidden; see Hos. iv. 12, 13; Deut. xii. 2. Originally it was the family circle which met together for a sacrifice (*cp.* i. 4, 5); the present passage witnesses to a later development by which the inhabitants of an entire city formed a community for sacrificial worship. In this particular case it would appear that only the chief men of the city partook of the sacrifice, since, according to *v.* 22, only about thirty persons were invited.

**13. for at this time ye shall find him.** I.e. you will find him at this very moment.

**14. they went up to the city.** *Cp.* *v.* 11. From the city it was necessary 'to go up' still further in order to reach the 'high place'; the high place stood on the higher ground overlooking the village where the people dwelt; *cp.* Gen. xxiv. 11; 2 Sam. ii. 13, xxiii. 16; 2 Kings ii. 21.

**within the city.** This should probably be: 'within the gate'; see *v.* 18.

**Samuel came out against them.** I.e. he met them; he was coming out of the gate just as they were about to enter.

*vv. 15-17. Saul is to be made king.*

15 Now the LORD had revealed unto Samuel a day before  
 16 Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel, and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is  
 17 come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people.

**15. Now the Lord had revealed unto Samuel.** Lit. 'And the Lord had uncovered the ear of Samuel'; the expression occurs several times in this book (xx. 2, 12, 13, xxii. 8, 17; see R.V. marg. in each case); cp. Ruth iv. 4; 2 Sam. vii. 27; 1 Chron. xvii. 25; Job xxxiii. 16, xxxvi. 10, 15; and implies an audible hearing of the divine voice. The more usual way of receiving a divine communication was by means of a vision, in which a seer perceived while in an ecstatic state (cp. Is. i. 1, etc.). In Num. xxiv. 4, besides these two means, a third is added, namely, a visible seeing with the eyes (cp. iii. 15; Acts ix. 3-5; 2 Cor. xii. 1-4).

**16. the land of Benjamin.** For the limits of this territory see Josh. xviii. 11-28. It was a rugged, mountainous, and somewhat inhospitable district, which no doubt contributed to the warlike and hardy character often ascribed to the tribe of Benjamin.

**to be prince over, etc.** R.V. marg., 'to be leader over...'; the word (*nagîd*) is not the usual one for 'king,' but it is used as synonymous with this in x. 1, xiii. 14, xxv. 30, etc. One of the chief duties of the king was to lead the people into battle (cp. viii. 20).

**and he shall save...Philistines.** Saul was largely occupied during his reign in seeking to overthrow the Philistine supremacy, though this was never really accomplished until the reign of David (cp. 2 Sam. iii. 18, xix. 10).

**for I have looked upon my people.** Read, with the LXX, '...upon the affliction of my people'; cp. Exod. iii. 7.

**17. Behold the man, etc.** Better, 'Behold, this is the man concerning whom I said unto thee, This one shall have authority over my people.'

*vv. 18-21. The meeting between Saul and Samuel.*

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, 18 Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And 19 Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. And as for thine asses 20 that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Ben- 21 jaminite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

*vv. 22-24. The sacrificial feast.*

And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them 22 into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about

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19. **and will tell thee all that is**, etc. The reference cannot be to any worry that Saul had regarding the loss of his father's asses, for this subject is dismissed as of little account in the next verse (cp. also v. 9); what was in Saul's heart was more probably anxiety for his tribe owing to the Philistine oppression, and plans for combatting the enemy.

22. **the guest-chamber**. As there was a guest-chamber situated on the high-place for the purpose of partaking of the sacrificial meal, so, in later days, there were chambers close to the Temple for the same purpose; see Jer. xxxv. 2, xxxvi. 12; Ezek. xl. 17, 45, xlii. 1 ff.

**the chiefest place among**, etc. I.e. by the side of the host, who in this case was Samuel (cp. xx. 25, where it is said that Abner sat beside Saul). In these early days in Israel people sat, or rather squatted, on the ground during meals (cp. Gen. xxxvii. 25, etc.), and the food was placed on a mat of leather or plaited grass on the floor; a table, in the modern sense, was a later unusual luxury; the Hebrew word *shulchân*, translated 'table,' means originally something spread out, and is equivalent to the *sufra* of the modern Arabs, who still eat their meals in the

23 thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, 24 Set it by thee. And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold that which hath been reserved! set it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

v. 25-x. 8. *The return from the sacrificial feast.*

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. 26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and 27 Samuel, abroad. As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on

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ancient way. Reclining on a divan at meals was likewise looked upon as an unusual luxury in the time of Amos (cp. Am. iii. 12, vi. 4).

24. **the thigh.** R.V. marg. rightly 'the shoulder.'

**and that which was upon it.** These words are meaningless; read 'and the fat tail'; cp. Exod. xxix. 22; Lev. iii. 9; this was regarded as a delicacy.

**And Samuel said, Behold...I have invited the people.** The Hebrew text is very difficult, and clearly corrupt; it is also clear that the LXX read a different text. Read (following an emended Hebrew text): 'And he said, Behold, there is the meat set before thee, eat; for they waited for thee till now (lit. 'till the appointed time') in order that thou mightest eat (lit. 'to eat') with them that were bidden.'

25, 26. **he communed with Saul...arose early.** Read, with the LXX (cp. R.V. marg.): 'they spread a couch for Saul on the housetop, and he lay down.'

26. **Up, that I may send thee away.** The Hebrew is not so abrupt as these words imply; render: 'Arise, that I may let thee go'; i.e. as the following words show: 'Arise, that I may accompany thee (on thy journey).'

27. **at the end of the city.** I.e. when they had come out into the open land.



before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still at this time, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God. Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that the LORD hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and taketh thought for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the oak of Tabor, and there shall meet thee there three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou

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(and he passed on). Both the LXX and Syr. rightly omit this.

at this time. I.e. now, at once.

x. 1. over his inheritance. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 9; Ps. lxxviii. 71. The LXX and Vulg. render, 'over his people, over Israel'; and both add the following words, which have every appearance of being original: 'And thou shalt rule over the people of the Lord, and thou shalt deliver them (lit. 'it') out of the hand of their (lit. 'its') enemies; and this shall be the sign for thee.' The three signs which Samuel foretells have each their special significance, the point in each case being to prove Samuel's right and authority to anoint Saul. The first sign shows that Samuel is a true seer; the second illustrates the homage that men will offer to Saul as their king; while the third is the visible manifestation of divine approval. Thus the spiritual authority in the land, the people, and the Lord Himself, all join in acknowledging and approving Saul's kingship.

3. the oak of Tabor. R.V. marg. rightly, 'the terebinth...', i.e. the turpentine tree; cp. Gen. xiii. 18.

loaves of bread. The Hebrew word implies that the loaves were round in shape; they were usually made in the form of flat cakes.

a bottle. R.V. marg. 'skin'; cp. Josh. ix. 4, 13.



shalt receive of their hand. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines : and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them ; and  
 6 they shall be prophesying : and the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy  
 7 with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And

**5. the garrison.** It is questionable whether 'garrison' is meant either here or in xiii. 3, 4 ; it means 'a pillar' in Gen. xix. 26, and 'a prefect' or 'officer' in 2 Sam. viii. 14 ; 1 Kings iv. 19 ; the Hebrew word used in xiii. 23 for 'garrison' is a different one. In the verse before us 'pillar' is unsuitable in view of xiii. 3, 4, for there would be nobody to 'smite' if there were only a pillar there ; it seems, therefore, best to render 'officer' of the Philistines.

**a band of prophets,** etc. Cp. xix. 20 ff. From these two passages we learn that the prophets in Israel formed themselves into companies ; their 'prophesying' was uttered by the whole company jointly, sometimes, as we see, while going forward in a sacred procession ; that this procession formed a kind of dance is probable when it is seen that it was accompanied by music of a somewhat noisy character, pipes, drums, and stringed instruments being used just as in festal processions to the sanctuary ; see 2 Sam. vi. 5, 14-16 ; Is. xxx. 29.

**a psaltery.** The Hebrew *nēbēl* means 'a harp,' and the word translated 'harp' (*kinnôr*) in this verse is properly a 'lyre' ; the difference between them was probably in the number of strings (the *nēbēl* had more than the *kinnôr*), and in the shape ; the word *nēbēl* implies that it was 'belly-shaped.' These are the only two stringed musical instruments mentioned in the Old Testament except in the book of Daniel. The strings were made of sheep's gut.

**a timbrel.** Hebrew *tôph*, i.e. a drum ; probably the most primitive of all musical instruments.

**a pipe.** Hebrew *chalîl*, i.e. flute. The earliest were made of reed ; later of wood ; and later still of metal and ivory.

**6. and shalt be turned into,** etc. This does not mean that Saul would be permanently changed in character, but that during the time that the 'spirit of the Lord' was influencing him his behaviour would be abnormal ; the point of importance is that this would be a *sign*.

**7. And let it be...serve.** Hebrew (see R.V. marg.): 'And

let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee ; for God is with thee. And 8 thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal ; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings : seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

x. 9-16. *The signs foretold by Samuel come to pass.*

And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go 9 from Samuel, God gave him another heart : and all those signs came to pass that day.

And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a band 10 of prophets met him ; and the spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came 11 to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish ? Is Saul also among the prophets ? And 12 one of the same place answered and said, And who is their father ? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul

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it shall come to pass, that when these signs are come unto thee, do for thyself as thy hand shall find' ; i.e. do whatever opportunity may then offer.

8. ...before me to Gilgal. Cp. xi. 14, 15, xiii. 4, 8 ff. This whole verse is probably a later insertion ; it breaks the narrative here, and is based on xiii. 7-15.

9. God gave him another heart. These words are evidently out of place, as the change in Saul is not expected until after the spirit of God has come upon him ; they belong more appropriately after v. 10.

12. And who is their father ? ' But who is *their* father ? ' i.e. is *their* (the prophets') father more likely than Kish to have had a son who was a prophet ? Although there is nothing to prevent anyone from being suddenly overpowered by this ' prophetic ' inspiration, the people evidently saw with surprise that this was the case with one in Saul's position ; hence the words : ' Is Saul also among the prophets ? ' words which became a proverb, used as an expression of surprise at seeing someone in

13 also among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses : and when we saw that they were not found, we came to  
15 Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee,  
16 what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

x. 17-27. *The election of Saul as king.*

vv. 17-24. *The people proclaim Saul king.*

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD  
18 to Mizpah ; and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the  
19 kingdoms that oppressed you : but ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses ; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and  
20 by your thousands. So Samuel brought all the tribes of  
21 Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families,

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company with those among whom he would not associate in the ordinary course. The exact converse would be expressed by the modern proverb, 'Birds of a feather flock together.'

13. **when he had made an end**, etc. I.e. when he had come out of his state of ecstasy.

vv. 17-24 form the sequel to chap. viii.; they are hardly appropriate here ; the different attitude of Samuel towards the kingship presented in the two sections shows that they come from different sources (see further *Intr.* § iv).

and the family of the Matrites was taken : and Saul the son of Kish was taken ; but when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they asked of the LORD 22 further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence ; and when 23 he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel 24 said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

*vv. 25-27. Some of the people murmur at the election of Saul.*

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the king- 25 dom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah ; 26 and there went with him the host, whose hearts God had touched. But certain sons of Belial said, How shall this 27

**21. the family of the Matrites was taken.** The name does not occur elsewhere. The LXX adds here: 'and the family of the Matrites was brought near man by man'; this addition is required; it has fallen out of the Hebrew text by mistake.

**22. Is there yet a man to come hither?** Better, with R.V. marg.: 'Is the man yet come hither?'

**he hath hid himself,** etc. Better, 'he hath hidden himself among the baggage.'

**24. God save the king.** Lit. 'Let the king live'; cp. 2 Sam. xvi. 16; 1 Kings i. 25, 39; 2 Kings xi. 12 2 Chron. xxiii. 11.

**25. the manner of the kingdom.** I.e. the main rules and conditions to be observed by king and people.

**26. the host.** Better, with R.V. marg., following the LXX, 'men of valour,' which contrasts well with 'men (or 'sons') of Belial,' in the next verse; cp. Judg. xxi. 10.

**27. certain sons of Belial.** R.V. marg.: 'Base fellows of worthlessness'; see note on i. 16.

man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

**xi. 1-15.** *Siege of Jabesh-gilead by the Ammonites; their defeat by Saul; he is proclaimed king in Gilgal.*

*vv. 1-4. Nahash the Ammonite encamps against Jabesh-gilead.*

**11** Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will  
 2 serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach  
 3 upon all Israel. And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the borders of Israel: and then, if there be none  
 4 to save us, we will come out to thee. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

**But he held his peace.** This belongs to the next section; see next verse.

**xi. 1.** In the LXX the words of x. 27 ('But he held his peace') belong to this verse; but they are read differently: 'And it came to pass after about a month (cp. Gen. xxxviii. 24) that Nahash...'; this is preferable to the Hebrew.

**Nahash the Ammonite.** The land of Ammon lay between the territory of Gad and the Arabian desert.

**Jabesh-gilead.** Cp. Judg. xxi. 8. The site has not been identified with certainty, but the name Jabesh still survives in that of *Wadi Jabis*, a little tributary which enters the Jordan about ten miles south-east of *Beisan*, the ancient Bethshan.

**Make a covenant with us.** Lit. 'Cut a covenant.' The origin of the expression is uncertain, but may arise from some ancient ceremony such as that described in Gen. xv. 10; Jer. xxxiv. 18. See McNeile, *Exodus*, p. 154.



*vv. 5-11. Saul defeats the Ammonites.*

And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the 5 field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God came mightily upon 6 Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut 7 them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man. And he 8 numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that 9 came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have

5. It is evident from this verse that the people know nothing of Saul's election to the kingship as told in x. 20 ff.

7. **cut them in pieces.** Cp. Judg. xix. 29; an expression used technically for 'dividing the joints' for sacrificing (cp. Lev. i. 6; 1 Kings xviii. 23). This sacrifice was intended for a consecration of the warriors; cp. the Hebrew phrase to 'consecrate war,' the ordinary expression for opening a campaign.

**and after Samuel.** This cannot have belonged to the original text; it is a later addition.

**the dread of the Lord.** Cp. Gen. xxxv. 5; R.V. marg., 'a terror from the Lord.'

8. **Bezek.** Cp. Judg. i. 4, 5. The site is marked by the ruins of the modern *Ibzik*, opposite Jabesh, north-east of Shechem.

**and the children of Israel, etc.** Cp. Judg. xx. 15-17; 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. These numbers are an exaggeration; the mention of Judah shows that the passage is a later insertion; in chaps. xiii., xiv. only Israel is mentioned.

9. **And they said.** Read, with the LXX, 'and he said'; Saul is the speaker, as in the previous verse.

10. **To-morrow, etc.** These words are, of course, addressed to Nahash and his people.



deliverance. And the messengers came and told the men  
 10 of Jabesh ; and they were glad. Therefore the men of  
 Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and  
 11 ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. And  
 it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three  
 companies ; and they came into the midst of the camp in  
 the morning watch, and smote the Ammonites until the  
 heat of the day : and it came to pass, that they which  
 remained were scattered, so that two of them were not  
 left together.

*vv. 12-15. Saul is again proclaimed king in Gilgal.*

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said,  
 Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may  
 13 put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a  
 man be put to death this day : for to-day the LORD hath  
 wrought deliverance in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come and let us go  
 15 to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the  
 people went to Gilgal ; and there they made Saul king  
 before the LORD in Gilgal ; and there they sacrificed  
 sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD ; and there  
 Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

**11. the morning watch.** Cp. Exod. xiv. 24. The night was divided into three watches of four hours each, beginning at sunset ; the 'morning watch' was the last of these, equivalent, according to our time-reckoning, to 2 a.m.-6 a.m. ; at some time during these hours, therefore, the attack was made ; cp. Judg. vii. 19 ; Lam. ii. 19.

**14. ...and renew the kingdom there.** Cp. x. 8 ; this is an editorial addition to combine the two accounts ; cp. x. 17-24.

**15. sacrifices of peace offerings.** Cp. Exod. xxiv. 5 ; the peace offerings were offered at times of rejoicing, and took the form of a festal banquet. Here it was a national rejoicing in celebration of the successful campaign brought to an end.

xii. 1-25. *Samuel's retirement and last words to the people.*

And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have heark- 12  
ened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and  
have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king 2  
walketh before you : and I am old and grayheaded ; and,  
behold, my sons are with you : and I have walked before  
you from my youth unto this day. Here I am : witness 3  
against me before the LORD, and before his anointed :  
whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or  
whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of  
whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes  
therewith ? and I will restore it you. And they said, 4  
Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither  
hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said 5  
unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his  
anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found  
ought in my hand. And they said, He is witness. And 6  
Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that ap-  
pointed Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers  
up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, 7

xii. This chapter has no connexion either with what precedes or follows it. It belongs to vii. 2-17, viii., x. 17-27.

3. **defrauded...oppressed.** The same words occur together in the Hebr. of Deut. xxviii. 33 ; Am. iv. 1. The word for 'oppress' is used especially in reference to withholding payment from a labourer.

a ransom. R.V. marg. 'bribe.'

to blind mine eyes therewith. Better, 'that I might hide mine eyes with it.' The LXX has 'or a pair of shoes' (cp. Eccus. xlv. 19), a reading which is perhaps to be preferred. 'A pair of shoes' is used in Am. ii. 6, viii. 6, as representing something of very small value ; so that according to the LXX the meaning would be that Samuel had been just and upright in small as well as in great things.

6. **It is the Lord.** Read, with the LXX, 'The Lord is witness.'

that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you  
 8 and to your fathers. When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth your fathers  
 9 out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in this place. But they forgot the LORD their God, and he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king  
 10 of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand  
 11 of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on  
 12 every side, and ye dwelled in safety. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came

**7. that I may plead with you.** In Jer. ii. 35 the Hebr. word is rendered, 'I will enter into judgement with.' It is perhaps better to render here, 'that I may enter into judgement with you in the presence of the Lord'; as the sequel shows, Samuel is going to convict the people of ingratitude for asking for a king (see *vv.* 19, 20) when all their past history witnesses to the merciful guidance and care of the Lord.

**concerning all.** Read, with the LXX, 'and that I may declare unto you all....'

**8. Egypt.** The LXX rightly adds: 'and the Egyptians afflicted them'; cp. Exod. i. 12; Deut. xxvi. 6.

**and made them.** I.e. God made them to dwell (cp. Lev. xxiii. 43; Ezek. xxxvi. 11, 33); so the LXX, while the Hebrew wrongly makes Moses and Aaron the subject.

**9. captain of the host of Hazor.** Read, with the LXX, 'captain of the host of Jabin, king of Hazor'; see Judg. iv. 2.

**11. Jerubbaal.** I.e. Gideon; see Judg. vi. 14, 32.

**Bedan.** Read, with the LXX, Pesh., 'Barak.'

**Samuel.** The occurrence of the name is strange in a speech ascribed to Samuel. The speech is the work of the narrator, expanded by a later editor.

against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king. Now <sup>13</sup> therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have asked for: and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve <sup>14</sup> him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you be followers of the LORD your God, *well*: but if ye will not hearken unto the voice <sup>15</sup> of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers. Now therefore stand still <sup>16</sup> and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call <sup>17</sup> unto the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain; and ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the <sup>18</sup> LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. And all the people <sup>19</sup> said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said <sup>20</sup> unto the people, Fear not: ye have indeed done all this

**13. and whom ye have asked for.** These words should probably be omitted, as in the LXX; they are superfluous.

**14. *well*.** Although not expressed in the original this is required, cp. Lk. xiii. 9.

**15. as it was against your fathers.** Read perhaps, with the LXX, 'and against your king'; cp. *vv.* 14, 25.

**16. will do.** Better, 'is about to do.'

**17. Is it not wheat harvest to-day?** I.e. a time during which there was in the ordinary way neither rain nor thunderstorms.

**thunder.** Lit. 'voices,' i.e. of the Lord, in accordance with the ancient conception of the Hebrews regarding thunder; cp. Exod. ix. 28 (R.V. marg.); Ps. xviii. 13, xxix. 3-9.

evil: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but  
 21 serve the LORD with all your heart; and turn ye not  
 aside: for *then should ye go* after vain things which  
 22 cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the  
 LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's  
 sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you a  
 23 people unto himself. Moreover as for me, God forbid  
 that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray  
 for you: but I will instruct you in the good and the right  
 24 way. Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with  
 all your heart: for consider how great things he hath  
 25 done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall  
 be consumed, both ye and your king.

xiii., xiv. *The War between the Philistines and the Israelites  
 under the leadership of Saul and Jonathan.*

xiii. 1-4. *Saul gathers his forces.*

13 Saul was [*thirty*] years old when he began to reign ;

21. and turn ye not aside...vain things. Read with R.V. marg., following the LXX, 'and turn ye not aside after the vanities.'

vain things. Cp. Jer. xvi. 19, 20; Hab. ii. 18. The Hebr. word here (*tôhû*) means 'a barren waste' (the same word as in Gen. i. 2); in Is. lix. 4 it means something 'worthless'; here it refers to false gods.

xiii. 1-4. This section comes logically after xi. 15.

1. Saul was [*thirty*] years old, etc. R.V. marg.: 'The Hebrew text has, *Saul was a year old*. The whole verse is omitted in the unrevised LXX, but in a later recension the number *thirty* is inserted.' The verse is probably a later addition by a scribe who desired to bring the text into conformity with those passages in the books of *Kings* which record the number of years the different kings reigned; see, e.g., 1 Kings xiv. 21, xvi. 11, xxii. 42; 2 Kings ii. 10, v. 4, viii. 17, 26, xii. 1, etc.; and see also 2 Sam. ii. 10, v. 4. The number *thirty* was, however, an unfortunate guess, for the context refers to Jonathan as already a man of war, so that Saul must have been much more than thirty years old. The original number given in this added verse is irretrievably lost.



and he reigned two years over Israel. And Saul chose <sup>2</sup> him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mount of Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines <sup>3</sup> that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul <sup>4</sup> had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal.

**he reigned two years over Israel.** The only meaning which these words can have is that Saul did not commence the Philistine war until after he had been king for two years. But this is not in accordance with ix. 15, which shows that the one object for which Samuel was to anoint Saul king was that he should deliver his people from the Philistines. This further illustrates, therefore, how unskillfully this addition has been made.

**2. Michmash.** Cp. xiv. 4, 5; the modern *Mukmās*.

**with Jonathan in Gibeah, etc.** The object of this was to protect Saul's own home.

**3. the garrison.** 'The out-post'; see note on x. 5. It was this act which constituted the declaration of war.

**Geba.** Read 'Gibeah' (cp. x. 5); see note on v. 16. The Philistines had entered into the heart of the Israelite country before this.

**and the Philistines heard of it...Let the Hebrews hear.** The text should probably be reconstructed as follows: 'And the Philistines heard, saying, "The Hebrews have revolted!" And Saul [in the meantime] blew the trumpet throughout all the land,' i.e. with the object of rallying the people round him. The name 'Hebrews' in the mouth of Saul would sound very strange since this is the designation given to the children of Israel by non-Israelites; cp. Gen. xl. 15; Exod. ii. 6, iii. 18; and see also iv. 6, 9, above.

**blew the trumpet.** Cp. Judg. iii. 27, vi. 34. 'Trumpet' (*Shôphār*) = 'horn.'

**4. that Saul had smitten, etc.** It has just been said, in the preceding verse, that Jonathan had done this; 'Saul' has evidently been written by mistake, and we should read 'Jonathan.'

**was had in abomination.** Lit. 'is become a stench';



*vv. 5-7a. The Philistines assemble at Michmash.*

- 5 And the Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched  
6 in Michmash, eastward of Beth-aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in holds, and in pits.  
7 Now some of the Hebrews had gone over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead;

*vv. 7b-15a. Saul offers a burnt offering in Gilgal.*

- but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.  
8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to  
9 Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And

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cp. Exod. xvi. 24; 2 Sam. x. 6, xvi. 21; Ps. xxxviii. 5. The word is a somewhat stronger form of the English idiom 'to be in bad odour.'

**Gilgal.** Read 'Gibeah.'

**5. thirty thousand chariots.** An obvious error; read, with the LXX, Pesh., 'three thousand chariots'; though this, too, is probably an exaggeration.

**Beth-aven.** East of Beth-el.

**6. in thickets.** The Hebr. has 'in thistles,' but the word is a corruption; render 'in pits.'

**holds.** 'Underground vaults'; the same word is used in Judg. ix. 46.

**pits.** Better 'cisterns,' as R.V. marg.

**7. Now some...over Jordan to.** Both the Hebr. and the LXX are corrupt; a slightly emended text, which is most probably correct, may be rendered: 'And some crossed over the ford of the Jordan to...'

**7b-15a.** This passage breaks the connexion between 7a and 15b.

**7b. followed him trembling.** Read, with the LXX (Lucianic recension, see *Intr.* § vi), 'trembled from after him,' i.e. 'forsook him trembling'; cp. end of v. 8.

Saul said, Bring hither the burnt offering to me, and the peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines assembled themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not intreated the favour of the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin.

*vv. 15b-18. Saul numbers the people.*

And Saul numbered the people that were present with

10. that he might salute him. Lit. 'that he might bless him.'

13. for now would, etc. I.e. it had been the Lord's intention to establish thy kingdom.

15a. from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. The LXX inserts after 'Gilgal' some words which make the narrative run more smoothly and which evidently represent what was originally in the Hebrew text; these words are: '...Gilgal, and went on his way. But the residue of the people went up after Saul to meet the enemy. And when they had come from Gilgal...' These words are clearly required to show why in v. 16 we find Saul abiding in Gibeah, when according to the whole of the preceding narrative he is in Gilgal. Both Samuel

16 him, about six hundred men. And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Geba of Benjamin: but the Philistines en-  
 17 camped in Michmash. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah,  
 18 unto the land of Shual: and another company turned the way to Beth-horon: and another company turned the way of the border that looketh down upon the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

and Saul leave Gilgal, but it is Saul, not Samuel, who goes to Gibeah in view of the impending battle. In the original Hebrew text 'from Gilgal' occurred twice, and a copyist carelessly overlooked the words that came between the two. As pointed out above, the section 7*b*-15*a* is a later insertion; the original text, therefore, from *v.* 7*a* ran as follows: 'And some crossed over the ford of Jordan [see note on this verse above] to the land of Gad and Gilead; but the residue of the people went up after Saul to meet the enemy; and when they had come from Gilgal (cp. *v.* 4) unto Gibeah of Benjamin, Saul numbered the people...' (*v.* 5*b*).

**16. Geba.** To be distinguished from Gibeah, though the two places are not far apart; from Geba it was possible to see what was going on in Michmash where the Philistines were encamped; this could not be done from Gibeah.

**17. the spoilers.** Better 'a plundering band'; cp. xiv. 15; Judg. vi. 4.

**Ophrah.** Cp. Josh. xviii. 23, the only other passage where it is mentioned, unless (which is probable) the Ephraim of 2 Sam. xiii. 23 is to be identified with it. Eusebius and Jerome speak of an Ephraim about five Roman miles east of Beth-el. The Ophrah of Judg. vi.-ix., the native village of Gideon, is a different place.

**the land of Shual.** This district has not been identified; it is not mentioned elsewhere.

**18. Beth-horon.** Cp. Josh. x. 10; near to Geba, and due west of it; the modern *Bel'ûr*.

**the border.** Read, with the LXX, 'Geba,' which looked towards the wilderness; 'the border' would be too indefinite. In Hebrew these two words look similar.

**that looketh down.** Lit. 'that leans out over' (cp. Num. xxi. 20, xxiii. 28); this would apply to Geba.

**the valley of Zeboim.** 'The ravine of hyaenas'; it corresponds

*vv. 19-22. The Philistines prevent the Israelites from making weapons.*

Now there was no smith found throughout all the land 19 of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went 20 down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock; yet they 21 had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes; and to set the goads. So it 22 came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

*vv. 23-xiv. 14. The attack on the Philistine outpost.*

And the garrison of the Philistines went out unto the 23 pass of Michmash.

Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul 14 said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side. But he told not his father. And Saul 2

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to the modern *Wady el-Kelt*. Cp. Neh. xi. 34. Michmash was thus a spot of great strategic value, roads issuing from it to the north, west, and south.

19-22. It is clear that these verses break the narrative; they were added later, probably with the object of seeking to explain why the Israelites never succeeded in throwing off the Philistine yoke during the reign of Saul. What is said in these verses is contradicted by the fact that Saul was now about to attack the Philistines; he was not likely to have led a force of unarmed men into battle against an armed enemy. Moreover, how would Saul have been able to defeat the Ammonites (see xi. 11) if his army had been without arms?

21. The Hebrew text of this clause is hopelessly corrupt, and defies emendation. The LXX gives no help.

22. **in the day of battle.** Read, with the LXX, 'in the day of the battle of Michmash.'

xiv. 1. **he told not his father.** Fearing that his rash intention would be forbidden.

abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that  
 3 were with him were about six hundred men; and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was  
 4 gone. And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and  
 5 the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the  
 6 south in front of Geba. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the

2. **Gibeah.** Read 'Geba,' in accordance with xiii. 16.

**the pomegranate tree in Migron.** Evidently a celebrated tree to be spoken of in this way; cp. xxii. 6, xxxi. 13; Judg. iv. 5, ix. 6. A place called Migron is mentioned in Is. x. 28, which is identified with the modern *Makrūn*; but this lies to the north of Michmash, on the road to Ai, and cannot therefore be the place mentioned; either there were two Migrations, or else the text here is corrupt. Perhaps it will be best to read, with the Pesh., 'the pomegranate tree beside the threshing-floor.'

3. **Ahijah.** In xxi. 2, xxii. 9, 11, 20, xxx. 7, the form is Ahimelech; the two names are closely similar, *melech* 'King' corresponding to *-jah*, i.e. Jehovah.

4. **Bozez...Seneh.** The two crags to which these names were given must be those that are to be seen at the present time; there are only two in the vicinity.

5. **rose up.** Lit. 'was firmly fixed'; but the word seems superfluous, and has probably got into the Hebrew text by mistake, being similar to the word which follows.

**Geba.** Cp. xiii. 3, 16. The passage (*vv.* 2-5) is parenthetical; the narrative is taken up again in *v.* 6.

6. **these uncircumcised.** The Philistines were the only people of Palestine who did not practise circumcision. In the mouth of Jonathan the words are a term of contempt.

**for there is no restraint,** etc. I.e. 'There is no difficulty to



LORD to save by many or by few. And his armour-  
 bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn  
 thee, behold I am with thee according to thy heart.  
 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto 8  
 the men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.  
 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; 9  
 then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up  
 unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then 10  
 we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into  
 our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. And both 11  
 of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the  
 Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews  
 come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.  
 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his 12  
 armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew  
 you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer,  
 Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them  
 into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon 13  
 his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after  
 him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-  
 bearer slew them after him. And that first slaughter, 14

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Jehovah to save either with many or with few'; cp. 1 Macc. iii.  
 18, 'With heaven it is all one, to save by many or by few.'

7. **Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee.** The Hebrew  
 text is not in order; read, with the LXX, 'Do all, unto which  
 thine heart inclines.'

**according to thy heart.** Here again the LXX reflects a better  
 text; read, 'as thy heart is so is my heart'; a more idiomatic  
 Hebrew phrase.

9. **in our place.** On the spot where they would first be  
 caught sight of.

10. **hath delivered.** Better, 'will have delivered.'

13. **his armourbearer slew them after him.** An armour-  
 bearer was not necessarily a fully trained warrior; one of his  
 duties in battle was to despatch those whom his master had  
 wounded; this is clearly shown in 2 Sam. xviii. 14, 15, where  
 Joab wounds Absalom and leaves him to be despatched by his  
 armourbearers. For a gloss which perhaps was originally added  
 to this verse, but has been displaced, see last note on v. 14.



which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.

*vv. 15-16. The terror in the Philistine camp.*

- 15 And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled: and the earth quaked; so there was  
16 an exceeding great trembling. And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went *hither* and thither.

*vv. 17-23. The battle of Beth-aven.*

- 17 Then said Saul unto the people that were with him,

**14. about twenty men.** This would presumably comprise the entire outpost.

**within as it were...an acre of land.** This is a very difficult passage, and it is scarcely possible to make sense out of the words; the Hebrew text is corrupt. The LXX text is also out of order, but it speaks of pieces of rock, the reference being apparently to the means used by Jonathan's armourbearer to slay the Philistines; since it was said in xiii. 19-22, that nobody but Saul and Jonathan had any weapons of war, a later scribe perhaps thought it well to add a phrase here explaining how the armourbearer was able to slay the Philistines, namely with pieces of rock. But if this supposition is correct, it will be clear that the words under discussion have got out of place, and should come after v. 13, thus: 'and his armourbearer slew them after him with stones (lit. "pebbles") and pieces of rock'; or something similar to this.

**15. in the camp...people.** Better, 'in the camp on the field, and also among all the people.'

**the garrison.** This has apparently been added by an oversight; the garrison (outpost) had already been practically annihilated.

**the earth quaked.** This was evidently the main cause of the panic among the Philistines.

**an exceeding great trembling.** Lit. 'a trembling of God,' cp. Gen. xxxv. 5.

**16. Gibeah.** Read 'Geba,' cp. xiii. 3, 16.

**and behold, the multitude...and thither.** The Hebrew text is corrupt; read, with the LXX, 'and behold, the multitude melted away hither and thither,' i.e. dispersed in alarm.

Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring 18 hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was *there* at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to 19 pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people that were with 20 him were gathered together, and came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture. Now the Hebrews 21 that were with the Philistines as beforetime, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about; even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that were

17. **Number now, and see,** etc. The object of this is to find out if the panic in the Philistine camp has been caused by any of those belonging to the Israelite army.

18. **Bring hither the ark...of Israel.** The Hebrew text cannot be right here: (1) it is partly untranslatable; (2) the ark, according to vii. 1 (and see 2 Sam. vi. 3), was not at Geba of Benjamin, but in Gibeah of Kirjath-jearim; (3) not Ahijah, but Eleazar the son of Abinadab was the priest of the ark; (4) what Saul wanted was to consult the oracle (i.e. the ephod, see note on ii. 28), cp. *vv.* 37 ff.; (5) the Hebrew word for 'bring hither' is used in connexion with the ephod (see *v.* 3, xxiii. 9; xxx. 7). Read, therefore, with the LXX, 'Bring hither the ephod, for he (i.e. Ahijah) bare the ephod on that day before Israel.'

19. **Withdraw thine hand.** I.e. from taking the lots from the ephod. The increasing tumult among the Philistines convinces Saul that now is the time to strike; he therefore does not trouble further about the oracle, but attacks the enemy without further delay.

20. **every man's sword,** etc. The reference is, of course, to the Philistines; it describes the panic into which they were thrown.

21. **the Hebrews that were with,** etc. The reference is to Israelites who had been enslaved by the Philistines during the period of their supremacy.

**into the camp...with the Israelites.** The Hebrew text is

- 22 with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also  
 23 followed hard after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over by Beth-aven.

*vv. 24-35. Saul forbids the people to eat.*

- 24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: but Saul adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until it be evening, and I be avenged on  
 25 mine enemies. So none of the people tasted food. And all the people came into the forest; and there was honey  
 26 upon the ground. And when the people were come unto the forest, behold, the honey dropped: but no man put his hand to his mouth; for the people feared the oath.  
 27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the

corrupt; read, with the LXX, Pesh. Vulg. '...into the camp, they also turned to be with the Israelites.'

**23. Beth-aven.** Cp. xiii. 5. The Philistines fled in a north-westerly direction.

**24. And the men of Israel...that day.** The connexion of thought in the Hebrew text with what follows is difficult to see; read with the help of the LXX, 'And all the people were with Saul, about ten thousand men; and the battle was spread over the hill country of Ephraim. And in that day Saul perpetrated an act of great folly.'

**Saul adjured the people.** I.e. he made the people take an oath.

**Cursed be the man.** Cp. Josh. vi. 26. It was a sacred prohibition or *taboo*, which it was thought would incline God to give them the victory. Abstinence from food would also ensure an uninterrupted pursuit after the Philistines.

**25, 26. And all the people...the honey dropped.** There are grave difficulties in this passage both in the Hebrew text and in the LXX; with the help of the latter the Hebrew text can be emended so as to give the following: 'And there were honey-combs in the field; and when the people came to where the honey-combs were, behold, a swarm of bees flew up; but no man....'

people with the oath : wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honey-comb, and put his hand to his mouth ; and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, and said, 28 Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth food this day. And the people were faint. Then said Jonathan, My 29 father hath troubled the land : see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had 30 eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for now hath there been no great slaughter among the Philistines. And they smote of the Philistines 31 that day from Michmash to Aijalon : and the people were very faint. And the people flew upon the spoil, and took 32 sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground : and the people did eat them with the blood. Then they 33

27. **his eyes were enlightened.** I.e. he was refreshed, he revived after all that he had gone through.

28. **And the people were faint.** These words are out of place here ; they have evidently got into the text from v. 31.

29. **a little of this honey.** Better, 'this little honey' ; even the small quantity he had eaten had refreshed him.

30. **for now hath there been,** etc. The sentence, as indicated in R.V. marg., can also be rendered interrogatively.

31. The narrative would run more smoothly without this verse ; after Jonathan's regret that the slaughter had been so small the words in v. 32, which describe how the people fell upon the spoil, would follow more naturally than the reference to the Philistine defeat ; in any case, v. 31 is parenthetical.

32. **flew upon.** The picture is one of birds of prey darting upon their spoil.

**and slew them on the ground.** I.e. they were slain so that the blood flowed upon the ground instead of being caught up and poured upon the altar, as commanded in the law.

**the people did eat them with the blood.** This was forbidden by ancient Hebrew custom, the prohibition being afterwards embodied in the written law, see Lev. iii. 17, vii. 26, xix. 26 ; Deut. xii. 16, 23, cp. Gen. ix. 4 ; Ezek. xxxiii. 25. The reason for the prohibition was that 'the life (lit. 'soul') of the flesh is in the

told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have dealt treacherously: roll a great stone unto me this  
 34 day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox  
 35 with him that night, and slew them there. And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

*vv. 36-46. Jonathan is saved from death.*

36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us  
 37 draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered  
 38 him not that day. And Saul said, Draw nigh hither, all

blood' (Lev. xvii. 11), i.e. it was believed that the principle of life lay in the blood, which was therefore looked upon with peculiar awe, and had to be poured out upon the altar, being thus presented to Jehovah.

**33. this day.** Read, with the LXX, 'hither'; cp. the words in v. 34, 'Bring me hither every man his ox....'

**34. every man his ox with him.** Read, with the LXX, 'each man that which was in his hand'; this is preferable for, as the preceding words show, some would have had a sheep.

**that night.** Omit, with the LXX.

**35. the first altar,** etc. Implying that he subsequently built others.

**36. Let us go down.** I.e. to the plain; the operations had hitherto been carried out in the hill country.

**Let us draw near,** etc. I.e. to consult the oracle, cp. v. 18.

**37. But he answered him not.** Cp. xxviii. 6. Saul takes this as a sign that Jehovah is wroth, and concludes that the reason of this must be that someone among the people has angered Him by sinning; see v. 38.



ye chiefs of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD, the God of Israel, Shew the right. And Jonathan and Saul were taken *by lot*: but the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did certainly taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand; and, lo,

38. **chiefs.** Lit. 'corners'; the same term is applied to the rulers, as the supports of the people, in Judg. xx. 2, Is. xix. 13. **wherein.** Read, with the Vulg., 'in whom.'

40. **Be ye on one side,** etc. For the purpose of casting the lot it was necessary that there should be two parties; if the lot were cast upon each individual in turn the process would have been interminable.

41. **Shew the right.** R.V. marg. 'Give a perfect lot'; neither of these renderings is justified by the Hebrew which is corrupt, a part of the text having fallen out through a copyist's error. The missing part is, however, preserved in the LXX, and we should read: 'Therefore Saul said, Jehovah, God of Israel, wherefore hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If the iniquity be in me or in my son Jonathan, then, Jehovah, God of Israel, give *Urim*; but if it be in thy people Israel, then give *Thummim*.' On *Urim* and *Thummim* see note on ii. 28.

43. **I did certainly taste.** Better, 'I merely tasted,' nothing more.

40, **I must die.** Better, 'Here am I; I will die,' i.e. I am ready to die. Jonathan recognized what according to the ideas of the time was taken for granted, that even an unintentional sin of this kind against Jehovah required the compensatory sacrifice of the 'sinner.' Saul's rash oath may be paralleled by Jephthah's (Judg. xi. 30-37); in each case the victim recognized the validity of the vow or oath.



44 I must die. And Saul said, God do so and more also:  
 45 for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. And the people said  
 unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this  
 great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD  
 liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the  
 ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the  
 46 people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul  
 went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines  
 went to their own place.

*vv. 47-51. A summary of Saul's wars. Saul's family.*

47 Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he  
 fought against all his enemies on every side, against  
 Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against  
 Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against  
 the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself,  
 48 he vexed *them*. And he did valiantly, and smote the

**44. God do so, etc.** Add with LXX, 'unto me,' after 'so';  
 cp. Ruth i. 17. See note on iii. 17.

**45. this great salvation.** This passage well illustrates the  
 sense attaching to the word 'salvation' in the Old Testament,  
 i.e. material prosperity, success, or victory.

**as the Lord liveth.** Cp. Ruth iii. 13. This is intended by  
 the people as a counter-oath to that of Saul, whereby the latter  
 might be made of none effect.

**rescued.** Better 'redeemed'; R.V. marg. 'ransomed.'

**46. went up.** I.e. to the hill country.

**and the Philistines went, etc.** From this it is clear that the  
 Israelite victory cannot have been very decisive, as, moreover,  
 the sequel proves, see *v.* 52, xvii., xix. 8, xxiii. 1 ff., xxiv. 1,  
 xxviii. 1, xxix., xxxi.

**47-51.** These verses interrupt the narrative between *vv.* 46  
 and 52; they are a later insertion.

**47. against Moab.** There is no other mention in the book of  
 Saul having fought against either the Moabites or the Edomites.

**the kings of Zobah.** Read, with the LXX, 'the king of...';  
 cp. 2 Sam. viii. 3, 12, x. 6.

**he vexed them.** Read, with the LXX, 'he was victorious';  
 cp. R.V. marg.

**48. he did valiantly.** Lit. 'he made might' (cp. Num.

Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishvi, and 49 Malchi-shua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: and the name of Saul's wife was 50 Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the 51 father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

And there was sore war against the Philistines all the 52 days of Saul: and when Saul saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

xv. 1-34. *Saul's Battle against the Amalekites.*

vv. 1-3. *Samuel urges Saul to attack the Amalekites.*

And Samuel said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to 15

xxiv. 18; Deut. viii. 17), i.e. showed himself courageous by his deeds of valour.

49. **Ishvi.** This form of the name occurs also in Gen. xlv. 17; the LXX has *Ishio*, representing the termination -jah; the original name was, however, Ish-baal. The termination -baal was altered in later days (cp. Hos. ii. 16, 17, '...thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of the Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be mentioned by their name'). Sometimes, in order to express horror at the name of Baal, the termination of a name which had been -baal was altered to *-bosheth* ('shame'), cp. Ish-bosheth (2 Sam. ii. 8) for Eshbaal (= Ishbaal) in 1 Chron. viii. 33, ix. 39. In early days in Israel 'Baal' was the designation by which Jehovah was known; this is clear from Judg. vi. 31, 32.

**Malchi-shua.** With the formation of the name, cp. that of Melchi-(= Malchi)zedek (Gen. xiv. 8).

51. Read, following the R.V. marg.: 'And Kish the father of Saul, and Ner...were the sons of Abiel'; this is also the testimony of Josephus (*Antiq.* vi. vi. 6); cp. ix. 1.

52. This verse belongs to, and forms the conclusion of, the section broken at v. 46.

**he took.** Lit. 'he gathered'; cp. viii. 11.

anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel : now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the  
 2 LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt.  
 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not ; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

*vv. 4-9. Defeat of the Amalekites.*

4 And Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten

**xv. 1. the words of.** Omit, with the LXX, Vulg.

**2. I have marked.** Better, as R.V. marg., 'I will visit,' i.e. punish.

**how he set himself,** etc. See Exod. xvii. 8-16; Deut. xxv. 17-19. It seems strange that the action of the Amalekites which took place so long previously should be urged as the reason for the present attack; it is probable that the original reason was that hinted at in xiv. 48, from which it is evident that the Israelites had been oppressed by the Amalekites in much more recent times.

**3. utterly destroy.** Lit. 'devote,' or 'ban.' 'The "ban" is a form of devotion to the deity, and so the verb "to ban" is sometimes rendered "consecrate" (Mic. iv. 13), or "devote" (Lev. xxvii. 28 ff.). But in the oldest Hebrew times it involved the utter destruction, not only of the persons involved, but of their property; and only metals, after they had passed through the fire, were added to the treasure of the sanctuary (Josh. vi. 24, vii. 24). Even cattle were not sacrificed, but simply slain, and the devoted city must not be rebuilt (Deut. xiii. 16; Josh. vi. 26). Such a ban is a taboo, enforced by the fear of supernatural penalties (1 Kings xvi. 34), and, as with taboo, the danger arising from it is contagious (Deut. vii. 26; Josh. vii.); he that brings a devoted thing into his house falls under the same ban himself' (Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 454). The 'ban' is referred to on Mesha's inscription (the 'Moabite Stone').

**4. Telaim.** I.e. Telem, in the South, or 'Negeb,' see Josh. xv. 21, 24; the exact site of the city has not been identified.

**two hundred thousand footmen.** This is an exaggeration; it

thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to the city of 5  
 Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto 6  
 the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the  
 Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them : for ye shewed  
 kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up  
 out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among  
 the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites, from 7  
 Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt.  
 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and 8  
 utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the  
 sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the 9  
 best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings,  
 and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not  
 utterly destroy them : but every thing that was vile and  
 refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

*xx. 10-31. The rejection of Saul.*

Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, 10  
 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king : 11  
 for he is turned back from following me, and hath not  
 performed my commandments. And Samuel was wroth ;  
 and he cried unto the LORD all night. And Samuel rose 12  
 early to meet Saul in the morning ; and it was told  
 Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he  
 set him up a monument, and is gone about, and passed  
 on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul : 13

is inconceivable that such a host could have been gathered together ; contrast the more modest figure, six hundred, in xiii. 15.

**ten thousand men of Judah.** This is a later insertion ; Israel and Judah were not yet separate kingdoms.

**7. before.** I.e. 'to the east of.'

**12. Carmel.** Cp. Josh. xv. 55, the mount south-east of Hebron.

**he set him up.** Read, with the LXX, 'he hath set up' for himself.

**a monument.** Lit. 'hand' ; cp. 2 Sam. xviii. 18, a sign or memorial of a victory.

and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD : I  
 14 have performed the commandment of the LORD. And  
 Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the  
 sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which  
 15 I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from  
 the Amalekites : for the people spared the best of the  
 sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy  
 16 God ; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then  
 Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what  
 the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto  
 17 him, Say on. And Samuel said, Though thou wast little  
 in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the  
 tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed thee king over  
 18 Israel ; and the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said,  
 Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and  
 19 fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore  
 then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst  
 fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the  
 20 sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea,  
 I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the  
 way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag  
 the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the  
 21 Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep  
 and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice  
 22 unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said,  
 Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and  
 sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold,

16. **this night.** I.e. *the* night, the one just past, = 'last night,' cp. v. 11.

17. **Though thou wast,** etc. Read, with R.V. marg., 'Though thou be little in thine own eyes, art thou not head of the tribes of Israel?'

22. **Hath the Lord as great delight,** etc. Cp. Ps. xl. 6-8, l. 8, 9, li. 17 ; Is. i. 11-13, 16, 17 ; Jer. vi. 20, vii. 22, 23 ; Hos. vi. 6 ; Mich. vi. 6-8 ; Hebr. x. 6-9. The words reflect the thought of a much later time in which it was taught that spiritual religion, not mere external observance, was what God required.



to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and 23 stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said unto Samuel, I 24 have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, 25 pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not 26 return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he 27

23. **witchcraft.** R.V. marg. 'divination,' cp. Deut. xviii. 10.

**idolatry.** Lit. 'iniquity' (so R.V. marg.), but sometimes with specific reference to idolatry, as here; cp. Num. xxiii. 21.

**teraphim.** The teraphim were evidently idols, and their worship was a remnant of Aramaean worship which was prevalent in Canaan before the Israelite settlement (cp. Josh. xxiv. 15). According to Gen. xxxi. 19, Judg. xvii. 5, 1 Sam. xix. 13, 16, they were household gods, in connexion with which divination was practised, cp. Zech. x. 2, Ezek. xxi. 21.

vv. 24-31 are probably a later addition; they are not altogether in agreement with what has preceded, for according to v. 13 it is Saul who speaks first and greets Samuel, whereas in v. 24 the words of Saul presuppose that Samuel has been the first to speak. Moreover, the twofold mention of Saul's rejection in vv. 26, 28, does not come naturally after this has already been definitely stated in v. 23. There is also a direct contradiction between v. 11 and v. 29; in the former it says, 'It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king,' while in the latter it is said, 'And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent'; such a contradiction would be inconceivable in a passage which came from one and the same hand. And, finally, the whole passage (vv. 24-31) offers no real contribution to the narrative, and would in no way be missed if it were omitted; indeed the narrative runs more smoothly if v. 32 be read immediately after v. 23.

24. **because I feared the people.** So far from this being a legitimate excuse, it was self-condemnatory, because as king it was his duty to guide the people, not to be led by them; cp. the words of v. 17, 'The Lord anointed thee king over Israel.'

28 laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a  
30 man, that he should repent. Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I  
31 may worship the LORD thy God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

*vv. 32, 33. Samuel slays Agag.*

32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is  
33 past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

*vv. 34, 35. Samuel returns to his house in Ramah.*

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to

**28. from thee.** Better, 'from off thee.'

**29. Strength of Israel.** As a title of Jehovah this does not occur elsewhere. Driver says that 'the expression here used is doubtless intended to characterize Jehovah as the *Glory* or *Splendour* of Israel'; R.V. marg., 'Victory,' or 'Glory'; cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

**32. delicately.** The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. By a change of the vowel points, but without altering the letters, a word can be obtained which means 'tremblingly'; this gives much better sense. The R.V. marg. 'cheerfully' can be disregarded.

**Surely the bitterness,** etc. The words of Agag can either imply a feeling of certainty that his life will be spared, or one of recklessness as to what his fate is going to be; the latter is more likely since he would have known perfectly well what was meant by the 'ban,' which was a usage common to all the Semites; see v. 3. The LXX and Pesh. read, 'Surely death is bitter.'

his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no more 35  
to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned  
for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made  
Saul king over Israel.

## DIVISION III.

xvi. 1-xx. 42. SAUL AND DAVID.

xvi. 1-13. *David is anointed King by Samuel.*

And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou 16  
mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being  
king over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will  
send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided  
me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can 2  
I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said,  
Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice  
to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will 3  
shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint  
unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did 4  
that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem.  
And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling,

35. for Samuel mourned, etc. Better, 'but Samuel etc.,' as R.V. marg.; cp. xvi. 1.

and the Lord...over Israel. These words are a later insertion, based on v. 11.

xvi. 1. seeing I have rejected, etc. Cp. xv. 23, 26. Samuel must bow in humble resignation to Jehovah's will.

fill thine horn. Cp. 1 Kings i. 39, and see note on x. 1.

I have provided me a king. Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 70, lxxxix. 19, 20, Acts xiii. 22, and St Paul's words, 'the powers that be are ordained of God' (Rom. xiii. 1).

2. I am come to sacrifice. Cp. ix. 12, xx. 29.

3. whom I name. Cp. Gen. xxii. 2; 2 Sam. vi. 22; 2 Kings vi. 10.

4. Beth-lehem. To be distinguished from the Beth-lehem of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15). It is now represented by *Beit-lehm*, five miles south of Jerusalem.

5 and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the  
 6 sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S  
 7 anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *the LORD seeth*  
 8 not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel.  
 9 And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither  
 10 hath the LORD chosen this. And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto  
 11 Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said,

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5. **sanctify yourselves.** Before a man might come to the presence of Jehovah he had to purify both himself and his clothes by washing, lest any uncleanness should attach to him or them (Exod. xix. 10 ff., 22; cp. Josh. iii. 5, vii. 13). Not many details are preserved in the O.T. as to what various things constituted uncleanness, but the two best known examples are contact with a dead body and leprosy (cp. Lev. xi. 32 ff., xiv. 4 ff.; Deut. xxvi. 14; 1 Sam. xxi. 4 ff.; Jer. xvi. 5 ff.; Ezek. xxiv. 17, 22; Hos. ix. 3 f.).

**And he sanctified Jesse, etc.** This apparently implies that Samuel assisted at their purification in some way.

6. **Eliab.** Cp. xvii. 13; Elihu in 1 Chron. xxvii. 8.

**and said.** More strictly this refers to what he thought in his mind.

7. *the Lord seeth.* These words are expressed in the LXX but not in the Hebrew; they must have fallen out of the text accidentally.

9. **Shammah.** Called Shimeah in 2 Sam. xiii. 3, 32, and cp. the name Shimei in 2 Sam. xxi. 21 (and R.V. marg.).

10. **seven...sons.** According to xvii. 13, 14, Jesse had only four sons, of whom David was the youngest; but cp. 1 Chron. ii. 13-15, where seven are enumerated by name.

There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him : for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, <sup>12</sup> and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him : for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him <sup>13</sup> in the midst of his brethren : and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

*xvi. 14-23. David at the court of Saul.*

*xv. 14-18. Saul sends for David.*

Now the spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, <sup>14</sup> and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And <sup>15</sup>

**11. we will not sit down.** Lit. '...sit round,' i.e. round the food which was placed on the ground; see note on xx. 24.

**13. and anointed him,** etc. Cp. x. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 20. If David was actually anointed in the presence of his brothers (who must, in this case, have realized the high position to which he had been called), it is very difficult to understand Eliab's words to David in xvii. 28. The inherent contradiction between the two passages is only to be accounted for by recognizing that they come from different sources.

**the spirit of the Lord came,** etc. Cp. x. 6, 10, xi. 6; Judg. iii. 10; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. The spirit of Jehovah only comes upon specially privileged persons (but see further on this subject the note on v. 14); chief among these are the prophets, cp. Hos. ix. 7; Am. iii. 7; in later times every pious Israelite might look for the spirit of Jehovah to abide in his heart, cp. Ps. li. 11, and, indeed, this might be the privilege of the whole nation, cp. Is. lxiii. 10, 11, while a time was looked forward to in which Jehovah's spirit would abide upon all flesh, cp. Joel ii. 28, 29 (Acts ii. 17 ff.). The earlier conception of the effect of the 'spirit' was martial strength and valour; at a later date the ideas became more spiritual. The inspiration of the prophets was something higher than that which David received.

**14. an evil spirit from the Lord.** Cp. Judg. ix. 23; 1 Kings xxii. 21-23. From the accounts given in the book Saul's illness seems to have been a kind of melancholia; that this was regarded as due to an evil spirit betrays the remains of



Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit  
 16 from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command  
 thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man  
 who is a cunning player on the harp: and it shall come  
 to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that  
 17 he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And  
 Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that  
 18 can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one  
 of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of  
 Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a  
 mighty man of valour, and a man of war, and prudent in  
 speech, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

*vv. 19-23. David plays before Saul.*

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said,  
 20 Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And

earlier animistic conceptions. The evil spirit is thought of as Jehovah's personal action (as in the case of angels, cp. e.g. Gen. xvi. 11, xxi. 17, xxiv. 7, 40; Exod. xxiii. 20, 23, xxxiii. 2; Num. xx. 16; Judg. vi. 12), and can therefore be spoken of as an evil spirit from Jehovah. Saul's illness is a judgement upon him.  
 troubled. R.V. marg. 'terrified.'

16. **Let our lord...to seek out a man.** Lit. 'Let our lord, now command, thy servants are before thee, let them seek a man.' As Driver says, 'the roughness and abruptness of the Hebrew (which is concealed in R.V.) is extreme; the LXX, in far better accord with the usual form of a Hebrew period,' renders, 'Let thy servants, now, speak before thee; and they will seek, etc.'

**who is a cunning player on the harp.** Lit. '(who is) knowing, as a player with the harp.'

**and thou shalt be well.** For the effect of music on the hearer cp. also 2 Kings iii. 15.

18. **prudent in speech.** I.e. capable in speech, acceptable in what he says and in his manner of speaking; but not in the sense of being eloquent, which is differently expressed in Hebrew; nor does it mean 'skilful in business' as in R.V. marg.

19. **which is with the sheep.** These words are probably a later insertion, in reference to v. 11, cp. xvii. 15, 34.

Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he <sup>21</sup> loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, <sup>22</sup> stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was <sup>23</sup> upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

xvii. 1—xviii. 5. *David and Goliath.*

xv. 1–3. *The Philistines prepare for battle.*

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to <sup>17</sup> battle, and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of <sup>2</sup>

20. an ass *laden* with bread. We should probably read (emending the text on the basis of the LXX), 'ten loaves.'

a bottle. Lit. 'a skin.' Such offerings in gifts of kind were in accordance with Oriental custom.

21. stood before him. An expression meaning 'to serve, or attend upon, someone,' cp. 1 Kings i. 2, x. 8, xii. 8, xvii. 1; Ezek. xlv. 11.

22. This second message to Jesse is to ask him to let David remain permanently at Saul's court.

xvii. 1—xviii. 5. The Hebrew text as it stands offers grave difficulties; it seems clear that extracts from two sources have been intermingled; xvii. 1–11 is taken from official records, xvii. 12–31 from a biography of David; this latter passage is entirely omitted by the better text of the LXX. There are also other verses in this section which the LXX omits; the reasons for these omissions will be given in the notes.

xvii. 1. Socoh. Cp. Josh. xv. 35; the modern *esh-Shu-weikeh*, on the southern side of the great valley of Elah. It is an admirable site for a fortification, lying 1145 ft. above sea-level. The Socoh mentioned in Josh. xv. 48 is a different place.

Azekah. Cp. Josh. x. 10; Neh. xi. 30; the exact spot has not been identified.

Ephes-dammim. Cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 9; 1 Chron. xi. 13; this likewise has not been identified.

Israel were gathered together, and pitched in the vale of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.  
 3 And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

*vv. 4-11. Goliath's challenge.*

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was  
 5 six cubits and a span. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.  
 6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin  
 7 of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head  
*weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and his shield-  
 8 bearer went before him. And he stood and cried unto

**2. the vale of Elah.** 'The valley of the terebinth'; i.e. the *Wādy es-Sant* which begins at Hebron and runs northward as far as *esh-Shuweikeh*, then turning westward by Gath and Ashdod, and running to the coast.

**and there was a valley between.** The Israelites must therefore have had their camp on the hill-side, with the valley running below them.

**4. a champion.** The Hebrew word means one who stands between two others; here with the object of deciding the battle by single combat. The LXX reads 'a mighty man.'

**Gath.** The modern *Tell es-Safi* standing at the mouth of the valley of Elah.

**six cubits and a span.** A cubit, or ell = six hand-breadths, or two spans; it was slightly over eighteen inches; Goliath's height would have been just over 9 ft. 3 in.

**5. an helmet of brass.** I.e. bronze; Goliath's defensive weapons are of bronze, his weapons of attack of iron.

**five thousand shekels.** The ordinary Hebrew shekel weighed 210 grains (troy weight).

**6. a javelin...between his shoulders.** In ancient times the javelin was often carried hanging down from the shoulders.

**7. the staff.** Better, 'the shaft,' cp. 2 Sam. xxi. 19.

the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with 9 me, and kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy 10 the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. And when Saul and all Israel heard 11 those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

*vv. 12-31. David visits his brothers.*

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth- 12 lehem-Judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of Saul, stricken *in years* among men. And the three eldest sons 13 of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third

8. **the armies.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'ranks'; so, too, in *vv.* 10, 21, 22, 26 etc.

**Why are ye come out,** etc. Goliath means by these words that there is no need for the whole army of Israelites to come out; this is a matter which can be settled by single combat.

**am not I...servants to Saul?** Words of studied insult intended to anger the Israelites and to induce them to send out a champion.

**choose you.** This is the (no doubt correct) rendering of the LXX; the Hebrew text is corrupt.

10. **I defy.** R.V. marg. 'reproach'; cp. 2 Sam. xxi. 21.

12-31. This section breaks into the narrative here; see note before *v.* 1.

12. **stricken in years among men.** The Hebrew gives no sense, and is probably a corruption of the expression used in Gen. xviii. 11, 'well stricken (i.e. advanced) in years'; the reason why this is mentioned is to explain why Jesse was not with the Israelite army helping to defend his country against the invaders.

- 14 Shammah. And David was the youngest: and the three  
 15 eldest followed Saul. Now David went to and fro from  
 16 Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem. And the  
 Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented  
 himself forty days.
- 17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy  
 brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten  
 loaves, and carry *them* quickly to the camp to thy brethren;  
 18 and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of their  
 thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their  
 19 pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel,  
 were in the vale of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.
- 20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the  
 sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had  
 commanded him; and he came to the place of the  
 wagons, as the host which was going forth to the fight  
 21 shouted for the battle. And Israel and the Philistines

**14. and the three eldest...Saul.** These words are superfluous after what has been said in *v.* 14; they are omitted by the Pesh.

**16.** This verse is likewise an addition intended to make some sort of connexion between this section and the preceding one.

**forty days.** The Hebrew way of expressing 'a number of days.'

**18. the captain of their thousand.** The various divisions of the army were traditionally held to have originated with Moses, *Exod.* xviii. 25, 'And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens' (*cp.* *Deut.* i. 15); these 'judged' the people, but the main function of these judges was to lead the people in battle when emergencies arose.

**and take their pledge.** I.e. a token, or message from them saying how they are.

**19. Now Saul, etc.** All this has already been said in *v.* 2. The repetition is due to the difference of sources.

**20. the place of the wagons.** *Cp.* xxvi. 5, 6. *R.V.* marg. 'barricade.' The reference is probably to an encampment circular in form, similar to the Bedouin encampments such as are still in vogue.

**as the host which was, etc.** Render: 'as the host was going



put the battle in array, army against army. And David 22 left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the 23 champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them. And all the 24 men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have 25 ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the 26 men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised

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forth to the scene of battle (lit. battle array), and shouting in the fight (lit. war)'; the attack had just begun, and was heralded with shouting (cp. Am. i. 14; Jer. xlix. 2, etc.), as well as with trumpet-blasts (cp. Josh. vi. 16; Judg. vii. 18). It will be noticed that what is said in this and the next verse does not accord with *vv.* 11, 32 ff., where it is a question of single combat. The difference of sources is thus again made clear.

**22. the keeper of the baggage.** This does not refer to an army official, it simply means that David left his parcels in the care of someone who would look after them.

**23. the Philistine of Gath, etc.** These words are a mere repetition of *v.* 4 due to the fact that this whole passage (*vv.* 12-31) belonged to a different source.

**according to...heard them.** Cp. *vv.* 8-10. These words are an addition intended to establish a connexion with the narrative as contained in *vv.* 1-11.

**24.** This *v.* is parallel with *v.* 11.

**25. the men of Israel.** Hebr. 'a man of Israel,' i.e. one of the Israelites.

**and make his father's house free.** I.e. no taxes will be levied upon him. The whole of this *v.* 25 is probably a later insertion; unless this is assumed David's question in the next verse is meaningless.

Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living  
 27 God? And the people answered him after this manner,  
 saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.  
 28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto  
 the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David,  
 and he said, Why art thou come down? and with whom  
 hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know  
 thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou  
 29 art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And  
 David said, What have I now done? Is there not a  
 30 cause? And he turned away from him toward another,  
 and spake after the same manner: and the people an-  
 31 swered him again after the former manner. And when  
 the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed  
 them before Saul; and he sent for him.

*vv. 32-39. David offers to meet Goliath in single combat.*

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail

**26. that he should defy.** Better, 'that he should have defied,' or 'reproached.'

**28. and Eliab's anger,** etc. This attitude towards David, even on the part of an elder brother, would be incredible if David had already received royal favours (see xvi. 21-23), and had been anointed (xvi. 13). These difficulties are overcome only when it is recognized that *vv. 12-31* are from an entirely independent source.

**29. Is there not a cause?** Read, with R.V. marg., 'Was it not but a word?' I.e. I have done nothing more than merely ask a question.

**31. And when the words,** etc. This must obviously refer to words other than those contained in the question addressed to the people (*vv. 26, 30*); but these words are not recorded. This passage is evidently only a fragment from some other source which has been inserted in the main narrative because it contained some particulars not embodied in the latter. But the insertion has been unskillfully made.

**32-39.** This section takes up the narrative broken by the insertion *vv. 12-31*.

**32. Let no man's heart fail.** Read, with the LXX, 'Let not the heart of my lord fail.' It will be seen at once that this follows naturally and smoothly after *v. 11*, where it originally stood.

because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able 33 to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's 34 sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote 35 him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant smote both the lion 36 and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. And David said, The LORD that delivered 37 me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD shall be with thee. And Saul clad David with his apparel, and 38 he put an helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword 39 upon his apparel, and he assayed to go; for he had not

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**because of him.** Lit. 'upon him' (not as R.V. marg. 'within him'). The reference is not to Goliath as the R.V. text would imply, but to Saul; 'do not lose heart,' or the like.

**34. there came a lion,** etc. Such things would have been comparatively common in those days in the lonely country districts of Palestine where the sheep and cattle were led for pasture. There are no less than five words for 'lion' used in the O.T., and the intimate knowledge of its habits shows how familiar it was to the Israelites of those days (cp. Is. xxx. 6; Jer. xlix. 19, l. 44; Zech. xi. 3, etc.). The bear is also frequently mentioned in the O.T., e.g. 2 Sam. xvii. 8; 2 Kings ii. 24; Prov. xxviii. 15; Hos. xiii. 8, etc.

**38. coat of mail.** Cp. 1 Kings xxii. 34; Neh. iv. 16 (10 in Hebr.); Is. lix. 17; i.e. armour which covered the upper part of the body with scale-like plates.

**39. he assayed to go.** The Hebr. text is corrupt; read, with the LXX, 'he wearied himself to go,' cp. Gen. xix. 11, 'they wearied themselves to find the door,' i.e. they exerted themselves in vain to find it.

proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these ; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

*vv. 40-54. The fight between David and Goliath.*

- 40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his scrip ; and his sling was in his hand : and he drew near to the Philistine.
- 41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David ;
- 42 and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him : for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and
- 43 withal of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves ? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.
- 44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts
- 45 of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin : but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast

**I cannot go with these.** This entirely agrees with what is said in xvi. 21 as to David being an 'armourbearer' ; as he was not a warrior in the full sense he would never yet have worn armour. For the duties of an armourbearer see note on xiv. 13.

**40. brook.** R.V. marg. 'torrent bed.'

**41.** This verse is omitted by the better LXX text ; it is superfluous in view of what is said in the next verse.

**the shield.** *Zinnah* is the large shield that covers the whole body, cp. 1 Kings x. 16 ; 2 Chron. ix. 15, etc., translated 'target' in the R.V. ; the small shield was called *māgēn*, cp. 1 Kings x. 17 ; 2 Chron. ix. 16, etc.

**43. by his gods.** Better, 'by his god,' i.e. the tutelary deity of Gath, whose name, however, has not come down to us. The Philistines carried idols into battle (see 2 Sam. v. 21). These may have been the images of the tutelary deities of the five federated Philistine cities ; each Philistine would regard the god of the city to which he belonged as his special god.

defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine <sup>46</sup>  
 hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from  
 off thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the  
 Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the  
 wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know  
 that there is a God in Israel: and that all this assembly <sup>47</sup>  
 may know that the LORD saveth not with sword and  
 spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you  
 into our hand. And it came to pass, when the Philistine <sup>48</sup>  
 arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that  
 David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the  
 Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took <sup>49</sup>  
 thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in  
 his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and  
 he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed <sup>50</sup>  
 over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and  
 smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no  
 sword in the hand of David. Then David ran, and stood <sup>51</sup>  
 over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out  
 of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head  
 therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their cham-  
 pion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of <sup>52</sup>  
 Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines,

**46. the carcasses of, etc.** Read, with the LXX, 'thy carcase and the carcasses of, etc.'

**that there is a God in Israel.** Better, 'that Israel hath a God.'

**48. that David hastened...And (v. 49).** This should probably be omitted, following the LXX.

**49. into his forehead.** The LXX, probably rightly, inserts before this 'through (his) helmet.'

**50.** This verse should be omitted, following the better LXX text; it sums up the whole combat, and one would expect it, if anywhere, at the end of the account; but the narrative continues in the next verse.

**51. their champion.** A different word in Hebrew from that translated 'champion' in *vv.* 4, 23; R.V. marg. 'mighty man.'



until thou comest to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way  
 53 to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philis-  
 54 tines, and they spoiled their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ; but he put his armour in his tent.

*vv. 55-xviii. 5. David is presented to Saul.*

55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul  
 56 liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire  
 57 thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine

**52. Gai.** Read, with the LXX, 'Gath.'

**Shaaraim.** Lit. 'the two gates.' In Josh. xv. 36 a place of this name is mentioned, but it was originally a town belonging to Judah, and therefore not likely to be a place of refuge for the Philistines; moreover, this would mean that the wounded fell in the near neighbourhood of the battle-field,—a pointless remark. It is probably better to take *Shaaraim* in its literal sense and follow the LXX in rendering 'in the way of *the* two gates,' meaning that the wounded fell down slain even while entering the two gates (viz. of Gath and Ekron), so determined was the pursuit of the Israelites.

**even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.** If *Shaaraim* is taken in its literal sense, these words will, of course, be superfluous, though they are preserved in the LXX.

**54. and brought it to Jerusalem.** This verse is obviously a later addition; during Saul's reign Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jebusites; it was not until some time after David had been king that Jerusalem was conquered; see 2 Sam. v. 4 ff.

**55—xviii. 5.** The whole of this section is omitted in the better LXX text. It is obviously independent of the preceding, and is a fragment from the same source as that from which xvii. 12-30 is taken.

**55—58.** These verses are clearly out of harmony with verses 32 ff. which represent David as well known to Saul, whereas here Saul knows nothing about him.

in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, 58  
 thou young man? And David answered, I am the son  
 of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite. And it came to 18  
 pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,  
 that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David,  
 and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took 2  
 him that day, and would let him go no more home to his  
 father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a cove- 3  
 nant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan 4  
 stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave  
 it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to  
 his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out whither- 5  
 soever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and  
 Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the  
 sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's  
 servants.

xviii. 6-30. *Estrangement between Saul and David.*

vv. 6-11. *Saul's jealousy.*

And it came to pass as they came, when David 6  
 returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that

xviii. 2. *go no more home.* As he had previously been  
 accustomed to do; cp. xvii. 15.

4. *And Jonathan stripped himself, etc.* There was much  
 significance in this since, according to ancient Semitic belief, a  
 man's clothes were conceived of as part of himself.

5. *went out whithersoever, etc.* Better, as R.V. marg., 'went  
 out; whithersoever Saul sent him, he, etc.'

*behaved himself wisely.* Better, as R.V. marg., 'prospered.'

6-11. These verses cannot be the continuation of the narra-  
 tive recorded in xvii. 1 ff., for the praises sung by the women in  
 honour of David presuppose something quite different from the  
 single combat with Goliath as there related. They belong to  
 the same source as xvi. 14 ff. The better LXX text, which is  
 superior to that of the Hebrew, omits a great deal of the matter  
 recorded by the Hebrew in ch. xviii.

6. *it came to pass...of the Philistine, that.* These words  
 are omitted in the LXX; the Hebrew text is out of order.

*the Philistine.* The Hebrew has 'the Philistines,' as indicated  
 in the R.V. marg.

the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women sang one to another in their play, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

**the women came out**, etc. Cp. xxi. 11, xxix. 5. This custom is referred to in Exod. xv. 20, 21; Judg. xi. 34, and also in Ps. lxxviii. 11, 'the women that publish the tidings are a great host.'

**king Saul**. The LXX has 'David.'

**timbrels**. I.e. 'tambourine'; a more elaborate form of the more primitive drum.

**instruments of music**. The precise meaning of this word in Hebrew, which occurs nowhere else in the O.T., is difficult to determine; the name of the instrument implies that it had something to do with 'three,' but the R.V. marg. 'three-stringed instrument,' is improbable, nor would it be appropriate in the present connexion where the chief thing was to make a noise; the alternative R.V. marg. 'triangle' is still less likely to be correct as no evidence exists of this having been known of in antiquity. Most probably the reference is to a primitive kind of drum, constructed of three sticks fixed together in triangular shape with a piece of skin drawn over them; this would be much easier to make than a circle-shaped drum, and like the tambourine would be held in one hand and struck with the other while dancing.

**7. sang one to another**. Lit. 'answered one another,' cp. Exod. xv. 21.

**in their play**. This is omitted, probably rightly, in the LXX.

**Saul hath slain....** This must at one time have been a popular couplet, see xxi. 12, xxix. 5; cp. Eccus. xlvii. 6.

**8. And Saul was very wroth**. The LXX omits these words; see note at the head of this section.

**and what can he have...kingdom?** The LXX omits these words; vv. 9-11 are also omitted there.

**9. eyed**. The Hebr. word is always used in a bad sense, 'to eye enviously.'

And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit 10  
from God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied  
in the midst of the house: and David played with his  
hand, as he did day by day: and Saul had his spear in  
his hand. And Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will 11  
smite David even to the wall. And David avoided out  
of his presence twice.

*vv. 12-16. Saul's fear of David.*

And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was 12  
with him, and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul 13  
removed him from him, and made him his captain over a  
thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.  
And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the 14  
LORD was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved 15  
himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all 16  
Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came  
in before them.

*vv. 17-19. Saul promises to give his daughter Merab  
in marriage to David.*

And Saul said to David, Behold, my elder daughter 17  
Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant  
for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let

10. **prophesied.** 'Raved,' R.V. marg.

11. **I will smite,** etc. Lit. 'I will smite David and the wall,'  
i.e. will smite them together, meaning that he will pin David to  
the wall.

12. **because the Lord...Saul.** These words are omitted in  
the LXX.

13. **Saul removed him,** etc. Clearly in the hope that as a  
leader of a thousand in battle he might get killed (see *vv.* 17, 21,  
25), cp. David's treatment of Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 14, 15.

**he went out and,** etc. Cp. *v.* 16; Num. xxvii. 17; 2 Sam. v.  
2. The object being to make himself popular with the people.

17-19. This section is omitted in the LXX.

17. **her will I give thee to wife.** Possibly this was in ful-  
filment of the promise referred to in xvii. 25.

**the Lord's battles.** As Jehovah is the God of Israel, the

not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the  
 18 Philistines be upon him. And David said unto Saul,  
 Who am I, and what is my life, *or* my father's family in  
 19 Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? But it  
 came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter  
 should have been given to David, that she was given  
 unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

*vv. 20-30. Saul gives his daughter Michal to David.*

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told  
 21 Saul, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give  
 him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the  
 hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore  
 Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law  
 22 a second time. And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*,  
 Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king  
 hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now

nation's battles are His, cp. xxv. 28; in Num. xxi. 14, 15 a quotation is given from a book called 'The wars of Jehovah.'

**For Saul said.** I.e. said mentally, so frequently in the book, e.g. v. 21, i. 20, xv. 32, xxiii. 7, xxv. 21, 22, etc.

**18. what is my life, or my father's family.** Read, with R.V. marg. 'who are my kinsfolk'; this is explained in the text by the addition 'my father's family,' i.e. my father's clan or group. The literal sense of the Hebrew word is, as translated in the text, 'life.'

**19. Adriel.** Cp. 2 Sam. xxi. 8, and the form Azriel in Jer. xxxvi. 26.

**the Meholathite.** Belonging to Abel-Meholah in the inheritance belonging to Issachar, cp. Judg. vii. 22; 1 Kings iv. 12, xix. 16.

**21. a snare to him.** The word signifies literally the bait in a fowler's net (cp. Am. iii. 5); and then, figuratively, a means of destruction, cp. Exod. x. 7, xxiii. 33, Judg. ii. 3, viii. 27. Michal was thus to be used as a bait to bring about David's death (see v. 25).

**Wherefore...a second time.** The LXX omits these words, rightly, as David had not yet been Saul's son-in-law; moreover, according to the verses which follow, Saul is dealing with David by means of intermediaries concerning this matter, not directly.

**22.** This verse reveals an unpleasant side of Saul's character.



therefore be the king's son in law. And Saul's servants 23 spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner 24 spake David. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to 25 David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told 26 David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law. And the days were not expired; and David 27 arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew that the LORD 28 was with David; and Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul 29 was David's enemy continually.

Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it 30

23. **seeing that I am a poor man.** And therefore unable to provide a dowry (see note on v. 25).

25. **dowry.** Hebrew *môhar*, the technical word for the 'purchase price' paid to the bride's kin originally, and later on to her father, by the bridegroom.

26. **And the days were not expired.** The LXX omits these words. They seem to be a fragment of a sentence which a scribe inadvertently left unfinished; there is nothing to which they can refer in the context.

27. **two hundred.** Read, with the LXX, 'one hundred' (cp. v. 25), which is also the number given in 2 Sam. iii. 14.

**they gave them in full tale.** Read, with the LXX, 'they completed the full tale of them.'

28. **Michal Saul's daughter.** Read, with the LXX, 'and all Israel'; this is obviously the better reading.

29, 30. These verses are omitted in the LXX, probably rightly.

came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

**xix, xx.** *Saul's enmity; David's flight.*

**xix. 1-3.** *Saul seeks the death of David.*

- 19** And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan  
**2** Saul's son delighted much in David. And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning,  
**3** and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee.

*vv. 4-7. Jonathan intercedes for David.*

- 4** And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-

**xix. 1. that they should slay David.** Having twice failed to get rid of David,—first by attempting to spear him, and then by sending him against the Philistines—Saul now commissions Jonathan and his servants to murder him.

**2. Jonathan told David,** etc. Saul's enmity towards David had already continued for some time, so that it is strange that Jonathan should not have warned David, or sought to mediate between the two, before. We must either assume that Jonathan only now discovered the state of affairs—which is rather improbable—or else that *vv. 2, 3* are an explanatory expansion of the text. In any case, these verses are fragmentary and incomplete, for the words 'I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art' presuppose some earlier reference to the field in question, as well as an explanation of how it is that Jonathan and his father will be there. It seems probable that *vv. 2, 3* belong to the section *xx. 4-17*, which, as will be seen, is derived from a different source from the rest of that chapter.

- 4. ...because he hath not sinned against thee.** The words

ward very good: for he put his life in his hand, and 5  
smote the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great  
victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice:  
wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to  
slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto 6  
the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD  
liveth, he shall not be put to death. And Jonathan 7  
called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things.  
And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his  
presence, as beforetime.

*vv. 8-10. Saul's jealousy is again aroused.*

And there was war again: and David went out, and 8  
fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great  
slaughter; and they fled before him. And an evil spirit 9  
from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house  
with his spear in his hand; and David played with his  
hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall 10  
with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence,  
and he smote the spear into the wall: and David fled,  
and escaped that night.

*vv. 11-17. Michal helps David to escape.*

And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch 11

involve the principle of 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' cp. Exod. xxi. 24; Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21; see Matth. v. 38.

5. **he put his life in his hand.** I.e. risked his life; cp. xxviii. 21; Judg. xii. 3.

7. Note the repetition of the name of 'Jonathan'; similar emphasis occurs with the name of David in 2 Sam. vi. 14, 15, xii. 19, 20.

10. **that night.** The LXX is probably right in connecting this with the next verse, 'And it came to pass that that night Saul sent....'

11. **and to slay him.** Omit 'and' with the LXX: its insertion implies that the messengers are to slay David, but this is not the case, for according to v. 15, it is Saul himself who intends to do this.

him, and to slay him in the morning : and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, 12 to-morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through the window : and he went, and fled, and escaped. 13 And Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* at the head thereof, and 14 covered it with the clothes. And when Saul sent messen- 15 gers to take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up to 16 me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers came in, behold, the teraphim was in the bed, 17 with the pillow of goats' *hair* at the head thereof. And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me thus,

**in the morning.** The most obvious thing would have been to kill him in the night, and not to wait until the morning ; but as Doughty (*Travels in Arabia Deserta*, i. 250) points out, among the ancient Semites, as well as among modern Arabs, sleep was regarded as a 'holy state' which might not be disturbed for fear of the vengeance of evil spirits ; David was therefore safe during the night, cp. a similar thing in the case of Samson, Judg. xvi. 2.

**13. the teraphim.** This verse shows that the *teraphim* must sometimes, at any rate, have been more or less of the size of a man if Saul's messengers could be deceived in this way. It is also worth noting that we find the use of teraphim side by side with Jehovah worship without any hint as to its being thought wrong. See further note on xv. 23.

**a pillow of goats' hair.** The exact sense is uncertain ; one cognate Hebrew word means a 'sieve,' while another is used for the 'coverlet' with which Benhadad was smothered by Hazael, 2 Kings viii. 15. The phrase appears thus to denote something made of goats'-hair in the manner of net-work,—probably a quilt ; cp. R.V. marg. 'quilt,' or 'network.'

**at the head thereof.** The head of the image was placed where David's head would have rested ; it is covered with this, presumably partly transparent, net-work quilt, so that the form of a head could be seen, but no features discerned ; the body of the image was covered with the clothes.

**14. she said, etc.** Read, with the LXX, 'they said' (i.e. the messengers, on reporting to Saul).

**17. And Saul said, etc.** It is clear that something has dropped out of the text here ; one expects some account of the surprise of the messengers on discovering that they had been duped ; and

and let mine enemy go, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

*vv. 18-24. David flees to Samuel in Ramah.*

Now David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to 18  
Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And  
he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was 19  
told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.  
And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when 20  
they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and  
Samuel standing as head over them, the spirit of God  
came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophe-  
sied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messen- 21  
gers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers  
again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then 22  
went he also to Ramah, and came to the great well that  
is in Secu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel  
and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in 23

also some reference to the messengers' return to Saul with the news.

**why should I kill thee?** Implying, of course, that he would be compelled to do so if she did not help him to escape.

**18-24.** This section is not an original part of the book. It is to some extent parallel to x. 10-13, and was apparently written with the object of giving an explanation of the origin of the proverb, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' It is, moreover, at variance with xv. 35, where it is said that Samuel did not again see Saul until the day of his death.

**18. Naioth.** 'The origin and meaning of this word, which occurs six times in the present context, are alike obscure... probably it is the name of some locality in Ramah, the signification of which is lost to us' (Driver).

**20. and Samuel....** 'And Samuel standing as one appointed over them.'

**22. to the great well that is in Secu.** The Hebrew text is corrupt; read, with the LXX, 'to the cistern of the threshing-floor on the (bare) height'; such a height where there would be plenty of wind would be just the place for a threshing-floor, cp. Jer. iv. 11, '...a hot wind from the bare heights...not to fan' (*sc.* the chaff in a threshing-floor).



Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on, and  
 24 prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

**xx. 1-3.** *Jonathan seeks to reassure David.*

**20** And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he  
 2 seeketh my life? And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father doeth nothing either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is  
 3 not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father knoweth well that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

*vv. 4-17. The covenant between David and Jonathan.*

**4** Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul

**24. naked.** Cp. Is. xx. 2; Mic. i. 8, 11; John xxi. 7; i.e. not naked in the literal sense, but having on only the long white garment which was worn next to the skin.

**xx. 1. fled from Naioth in Ramah, and.** These words are a later insertion added for the purpose of connecting this section (xx. 1-3) with the preceding. This section forms the continuation of xix. 17.

**2. discloseth it unto me.** Lit. 'uncovereth mine ear'; cp. ix. 15 (R.V. marg.).

**and why should...? it is not so.** One has only to contrast with this what is said in xix. 2 to see at once that the sections are from different sources.

**3. sware.** The context shows that this word is inappropriate here; read, with the LXX, 'answered.'

**4-17.** The whole of this section, which breaks the narrative between vv. 3 and 18, and which is in part parallel to vv. 18-23, is from another and a later source.

desireth, I will even do it for thee. And David said unto 5  
Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I  
should not fail to sit with the king at meat : but let me  
go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day  
at even. If thy father miss me at all, then say, David 6  
earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-  
lehem his city : for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all  
the family. If he say thus, It is well ; thy servant shall 7  
have peace : but if he be wroth, then know that evil is  
determined by him. Therefore deal kindly with thy 8  
servant ; for thou hast brought thy servant into a cove-  
nant of the LORD with thee : but if there be in me  
iniquity, slay me thyself ; for why shouldest thou bring  
me to thy father ? And Jonathan said, Far be it from 9  
thee : for if I should at all know that evil were determined  
by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it  
thee ? Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me 10

4. **Whatsoever thy soul desireth....** Lit. 'What thy soul saith, and I will do it for thee?'

**thy soul.** According to the Hebrew conception the 'soul' was the seat of the emotions, while the 'heart' was the seat of the understanding. 'Soul' is often used as the person himself, e.g. xviii. 1, 3.

**desireth.** The Hebr. has 'saith'; but the R.V. is probably right in following the LXX.

5. **to morrow is,** etc. Read, with the LXX, 'To morrow is the new moon, and I will *not* sit with the king at meat ; but thou shalt let me go, etc.'

**the new moon.** In ancient Israel the feasts at the new moon occupied a very important place, see 2 Kings iv. 23 ; Is. i. 13, 14 ; Hos. ii. 11 ; Am. viii. 5.

**unto the third day at even.** The Hebrew as it stands is ungrammatical ; read, with the LXX, 'until the evening.'

6. **for it is...for all the family.** The Hebrew word *mishpāhāh* does not mean 'family,' but 'clan,' which includes a number of households or 'families.' At such an annual festivity it was the sacred duty of all the clansmen to attend.

8. **for thou hast brought,** etc. It is called a 'covenant of the Lord,' because the Lord is witness, and will Himself punish the breaker of such a covenant.

- 11 if perchance thy father answer thee roughly? And Jonathan said unto David, Come and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.
- 12 And Jonathan said unto David, The LORD, the God of Israel, *be witness*; when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, *or* the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto thee, and
- 13 disclose it unto thee? The LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he
- 14 hath been with my father. And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die
- 15 not: but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.
- 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David,

11. **let us go out into the field.** It is in the field that Jonathan can explain to David more clearly how he will let him know whether Saul is bitter against him; but the narrative breaks off here abruptly. In the parallel passage, *vv.* 18 ff., it is explained for what purpose they went out into the field.

12. *be witness.* The present Hebrew text does not express this, but it evidently stood there originally and fell out by accident; the Pesh. presupposes it, and the LXX has a word which presupposes a corruption of the original word in the Hebrew.

*or the third day.* This is an unskillful insertion added later on the strength of *v.* 27.

13. **The Lord do so,** etc. The oath in this form meant that Jonathan called upon Jehovah to bring some evil (that it was left undefined made it none the less dreadful) upon him if he did not keep his promise made to David; see note on *iii.* 17.

14-16. This is a difficult passage; the Hebrew is ambiguous in parts, and corrupt in one or two places; render the whole thus with the help of the LXX: 'And mayest thou, if I am still alive, show me the kindness of the Lord. But if I am dead, do thou never cut off thy kindness from my house; and if, when the Lord shall have cut off the enemies of David every one of them from off the land, the name of Jonathan be cut off by the house

saying, And the LORD shall require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear 17 again, for the love that he had to him : for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

*vv. 18-23. Jonathan and David.*

Then Jonathan said unto him, To-morrow is the new 18 moon : and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And when thou hast stayed three days, thou 19 shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. And I will shoot three 20 arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

of David, the Lord shall require it at the hand of David.' The general meaning of the passage is clear enough; Jonathan wants to secure the safety of his house in view of the fact that David will before long be ruler in the land. The hand of a later scribe is thus clearly seen, for Jonathan is not likely at this period to have taken for granted the fall of his father's house and the absolute ascendancy of David; at this time things pointed in the contrary direction.

**17. Jonathan caused David to swear again.** Read, with the LXX, 'And Jonathan swear to David again,' the reference is to *vv.* 12, 13, a reiteration of the oath there made.

**for the love...to him.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'by his love toward him.'

The narrative is now taken up again from the end of *v.* 3.

**18.** With the whole verse, cp. *vv.* 5, 6 and 25, 27.

**19. And when thou hast stayed three days...quickly.** Read, with the LXX, 'And on the third day thou wilt be greatly missed.' As Driver says, in rendering 'quickly' the R.V. 'takes an unwarrantable liberty with the Hebrew,' both by mistranslating and by misplacing it.

**when the business was in hand.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'in the day of the business'; it is uncertain what is referred to, perhaps *xix.* 1, 4-7.

**the stone Ezel.** Read, with the LXX (cp. R.V. marg.), 'this mound' (see also *v.* 41). The Hebrew text is corrupt; but the LXX translators, not understanding the word, transliterated it, thereby preserving the original Hebrew text.

**20. And I will shoot...thereof.** Read, following the LXX,

- 21 And, behold, I will send the lad, *saying*, Go, find the arrows. If I say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee : take them, and come ; for there is  
 22 peace to thee and no hurt, as the LORD liveth. But if I say thus unto the boy, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee : go thy way ; for the LORD hath sent thee away.  
 23 And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD is between thee and me for ever.

*vv. 24-35. Quarrel between Saul and Jonathan.*

- 24 So David hid himself in the field : and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.  
 25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon the seat by the wall ; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side : but David's place was empty.  
 26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day : for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean ;  
 27 surely he is not clean. And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, *which was* the second day,

'And I on the third day will shoot with arrows to the side thereof,' i.e. of the mound.

**21. them.** The Hebr., as well as the LXX, has 'it.'

**and no hurt.** Better, 'and it is nothing,' i.e. your fears are groundless.

**22. hath sent thee away.** I.e. 'will have sent thee away.'

**23. And as touching,** etc. The reference is to the agreement made in the immediately preceding verses.

**24. sat him down to eat meat.** Cp. Gen. xxvii. 19; Judg. xix. 6; 1 Kings xiii. 19; squatting on the ground is meant; only in later days did the more luxurious foreign custom come into vogue of reclining on couches during meals; this is mentioned for the first time in the O.T. in Am. vi. 4.

**25. Jonathan stood up.** As the context shows the relative positions of those at table are being described ('Abner sat...'), so that 'stood up' is quite inappropriate here, read, with the LXX, 'Jonathan was in front of,' i.e. of Saul.

**26. surely he is not clean.** The LXX rendering is perhaps better, 'for he hath not been cleansed.'

**27. which was the second day.** R.V. rightly follows the



that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to-day? And Jonathan 28 answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem: and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for 29 our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he is not come unto the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against 30 Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of 31 Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be stablished, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered 32 Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore should he

LXX in inserting 'day,' which has dropped out of the Hebrew text.

**the son of Jesse.** This more formal way of speaking of David is expressive of Saul's displeasure.

29. **my brother, he...*to be there*.** Read, following the LXX, 'Behold, my brethren have commanded me'; by 'brethren' are meant 'clansmen,' see note on v. 6.

30. **a perverse rebellious woman.** The Hebrew text is corrupt; it is perhaps best to read, following the LXX, 'a rebellious girl,' i.e. a slave-girl who has run away from her master (cp. Judith xvi. 12, 'The sons of damsels pierced them through, and wounded them as runagates' children').

**thou hast chosen.** Read, with the LXX, 'thou art a companion of.'

31. **thou shalt not be...nor thy kingdom.** Although both Saul and David were *elected* by the people to be king, it is clear from this passage that the monarchy was already thought of as an hereditary one.

**he shall surely die.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'he is a son of death'; cp. xxvi. 16; 2 Sam. xii. 5; 1 Kings ii. 26; R.V. marg. in each case.

- 33 be put to death? what hath he done? And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to put David to death.
- 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

*vv. 35-39. Jonathan fulfils his agreement with David.*

- 35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David,
- 36 and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran,
- 37 he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow
- 38 beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up
- 39 the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

*vv. 40-42. David's farewell to Jonathan.*

- 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said

**36. beyond him.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'making it pass over him.'

**38. Make haste,** etc. The words were, of course, not spoken to the lad, but were intended for David's benefit; they must be taken with Jonathan's words in the preceding verse. See *vv.* 21, 22, which describe the arrangement made between Jonathan and David.

**and came.** Read, with the LXX, Pesh., Vulg., 'and he brought (it).'

**40-42.** These verses are from another source, and must have been added later, for the object of the arrangement recounted in the preceding verses was just in order to avoid the necessity of Jonathan and David meeting.

**40. weapons.** The use of this word instead of 'arrow' indicates the difference of source.

unto him, Go, carry them to the city. And as soon as <sup>41</sup> the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And <sup>42</sup> Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

## DIVISION IV.

xxi. 1-xxvi. 25. DAVID AS AN OUTLAW.

xxi. 1-9. *David at Nob.*

Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: <sup>21</sup> and Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king <sup>2</sup> hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed the young men to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five <sup>3</sup>

<sup>41.</sup> out of *a place* toward the South. Read, with the LXX and Pesh., 'from beside the mound.'

until David exceeded. It is evident that the Hebrew text is corrupt here; the LXX did not understand it and is therefore of no help.

xxi. 1. Nob. Cp. Is. x. 32; Neh. xi. 33; the only passages outside 1 Sam. where the place is mentioned. It was probably a spot on some hill to the north, but within the vicinity, of Jerusalem; it has not been identified.

...trembling. I.e. obsequiously; Ahimelech would have known David to be an influential person at court, hence also his surprise that David should be unattended.

3. Now therefore, etc. The LXX read the Hebrew somewhat differently: 'Hast thou now five loaves [lit. 'are there now five

loaves of bread in mine hand, or whatsoever there is  
 4 present. And the priest answered David, and said, There  
 is no common bread under mine hand, but there is holy  
 bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from  
 5 women. And David answered the priest, and said unto  
 him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about  
 these three days; when I came out, the vessels of the  
 young men were holy, though it was but a common  
 journey; how much more then to-day shall their vessels  
 6 be holy? So the priest gave him holy *bread*: for there  
 was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken  
 from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when  
 7 it was taken away. Now a certain man of the servants  
 of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD;  
 and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chiefest of the  
 8 herdmen that belonged to Saul. And David said unto  
 Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear  
 or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my  
 weapons with me, because the king's business required

loaves under thy hand']? Give (them) to me (or) whatever else  
 there is [lit. 'give into my hand that which is found']. This  
 is to be preferred.

4. **holy bread.** I.e. bread which had been dedicated to  
 Jehovah, cp. Exod. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5 ff.; and see Matt. xii.  
 3, 4; Mk. ii. 25, 26; Lk. vi. 3, 4; where the incident is referred  
 to by our Lord.

7. **detained before the Lord.** Lit. 'restrained' or 'shut up';  
 the meaning is that he was confined near the sanctuary for the  
 purpose of undergoing purification.

**Doeg the Edomite.** For foreigners in the service of an Is-  
 raelite king cp. the 'Cherethites and Pelethites' who formed  
 David's body-guard (2 Sam. viii. 18, xv. 18, xx. 7, 23), as well  
 as the Gittites from Gath (2 Sam. xv. 18).

**the chiefest of the herdmen.** The Hebrew text is corrupt,  
 render 'the chiefest of the runners,' i.e. those who ran before  
 Saul (see xxii. 17, R.V. marg.) according to oriental custom.

8. **is there not...spear or sword?** The presence of such a  
 partisan as Doeg warned David of the necessity of having some  
 weapon of self-defence.

haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the 9  
Philistine, whom thou slewest in the vale of Elah, behold,  
it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod : if thou  
wilt take that, take it : for there is no other save that here.  
And David said, There is none like that ; give it me.

*vv. 10-15. David flees to Gath.*

And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, 10  
and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants 11  
of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of  
the land? did they not sing one to another of him in  
dances, saying,

Saul hath slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands?

And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore 12  
afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his 13  
behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their  
hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let  
his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish 14  
unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad : wherefore  
then have ye brought him to me? Do I lack mad men, 15

**9. The sword of Goliath.** Cp. xvii. 51 ; in xxxi. 10 we are told of the Philistines putting Saul's armour in the temple of Astarte ; the ancient Arabs also placed armour taken in battle in their sanctuaries as gifts.

**10-15.** According to the account here given David is a solitary fugitive, while in the parallel account in ch. xxvii. he is at the head of a large band. There can be little doubt that the account before us is a later narrative than that contained in ch. xxvii.

**10. fled that day for fear of Saul.** We must suppose that it was the presence of Doeg which inspired this fear. David would have taken for granted that the chief of Saul's body-guard would report to his master where he had seen David, cp. xxii. 9.

**Achish the king of Gath.** See the title to Ps. xxxiv., where 'Ahimelech' has been written, by mistake, for Achish.

**11. the king of the land.** Perhaps this title is given to David on account of his superiority to Saul as described in the couplet that follows.

**13. scrabbled.** Read, with the LXX, 'drummed.'



that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

**xxii. 1-5.** *David in the cave of Adullam.*

- 22** David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.
- 2** And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.
- 3** And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what
- 4** God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that

**xxii. 1. The cave of Adullam.** In *v.* 4 and in 2 Sam. xxiii. 14, it is the 'hold,' or defensive position, of Adullam which is spoken of, though in 2 Sam. xxiii. 13 (= 1 Chron. xi. 15) it is again the 'cave' of Adullam. The two words are very similar in Hebrew, and perhaps the word for 'cave' is merely a mistake here for that which means 'hold.' The site of Adullam has been identified, in all probability, with the modern *Id-el-ma*, a place situated in the Shephelah (cp. Josh. xv. 33, 35), on a steep hill, and therefore easily made defensible; on the top of the hill there are several caves. It is, therefore, possible that the mention at one time of the 'cave,' at another of the 'stronghold' of Adullam may refer to two spots on the same site.

**all his father's house.** I.e. his family, as distinct from the clan, of which it formed a part, see note on xx. 6.

**they went down.** I.e. from the hill-country down to the more low-lying Shephelah.

**2. discontented.** R.V. marg. 'bitter of soul.'

**3. Mizpeh of Moab.** Only mentioned here; it has not been identified.

**come forth, and be with you.** Read, with Pesh. Vulg., 'dwell with you,' cp. the next verse.

**till I know, etc.** David sees the hand of God in all that is happening.

**4. And he brought them.** Read, with Pesh. Vulg., 'and he left them.'

David was in the hold. And the prophet Gad said unto 5 David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.

*xxi. 6-23. The massacre at Nob.*

And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the 6 men that were with him: now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. And 7 Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; that all of you 8 have conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or discloseth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then 9 answered Doeg the Edomite, which stood by the servants

**5. the forest of Hereth.** This has not been identified with certainty, but on the east of Adullam stands the modern village of *K'haras* by a wooded mountain; it is possible that this represents the ancient Hereth.

**6. the tamarisk tree.** Cp. xxxi. 13; Gen. xxi. 33. Saul's court was naturally a very simple and primitive one; he was without a capital and did not enjoy anything in the shape of royal luxuries like the later kings. 'Sitting' means 'living' or 'staying.'

**in Ramah.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'on the height.'

**7. will the son of Jesse give, etc.** Cp. viii. 12-15. Saul is obsessed with the idea that David intends to usurp the kingdom; no hint is, however, given that this was in David's mind.

**8. that is sorry for me.** Read, with the LXX, 'that hath compassion on me.'

**to lie in wait.** Read, with the LXX, 'as an enemy,' or '(to be) an enemy'; cp. v. 13.

**9. which stood by.** This, and not R.V. marg. 'was set over,' should be read. Doeg was not set over the servants of the king, for it is unlikely that the chief men of Benjamin would

of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob,  
 10 to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the  
 LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the  
 11 sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king sent to  
 call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his  
 father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they  
 12 came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now,  
 thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my  
 13 lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired  
 against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast  
 given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God  
 for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as  
 14 at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and  
 said, And who among all thy servants is so faithful as  
 David, which is the king's son in law, and is taken into  
 15 thy council, and is honourable in thine house? Have I  
 to-day begun to inquire of God for him? be it far from  
 me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant,  
 nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant know-  
 16 eth nothing of all this, less or more. And the king said,

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have submitted to be placed under a foreigner. The sentence 'which stood by the servants of Saul' was written to explain how it came about that Doeg was there at all, i.e. he happened to be standing by the servants of Saul; he is thus *distinguished* from the 'servants,' by whom we are to understand the heads of clans etc. (see v. 14) of the tribe of Benjamin.

**10. gave him victuals.** The shew-bread is scarcely likely to have been referred to in this way, cp. xxi. 3-6; it looks as though we had here a fragment of some other source containing an account of David's interview with Ahimelech.

**12. thou son of Ahitub.** This mode of address is intended to express the king's wrath, cp. 'the son of Jesse,' instead of David, in the next verse, and in xx. 30.

**14. And who among,** etc. The breach between Saul and David was apparently still unknown outside the king's immediate circle.

**is taken into thy council.** Read, with the LXX, 'is the captain over thy body-guard'; see 2 Sam. xxiii. 23 (R.V. marg.); 1 Chron. xi. 25 (R.V. marg.).

**15. thy servant knoweth nothing,** etc. I.e. of the alleged conspiracy of David, see v. 13.

Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the guard that 17 stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. And the king said 18 to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and he slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, 19 smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And one of the sons 20 of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that 21 Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. And David said unto 22 Abiathar, I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my 23

**17. the guard.** Lit. 'the runners,' as R.V. marg.; cp. 2 Kings x. 25, xi. 4, 6; 2 Chron. xii. 10; in each of these passages the R.V. reads 'guard,' but does not always give the marginal note.

**Turn.** Better 'surround,' see 2 Sam. xviii. 15.

**slay the priests of the Lord.** Cp. the similar wholesale massacres mentioned in 1 Kings xviii. 40, 2 Kings x. 25.

**But the servants, etc.** Their refusal was due to a superstitious dread of laying violent hands on Jehovah's priests.

**18. that did wear a linen ephod.** Read, with the LXX, 'that did bear the ephod'; it is a different word in Hebrew that is used of girding on a linen ephod, e.g. ii. 8; 2 Sam. vi. 14.

**20. and fled after David.** His knowledge of where David had fled to suggests that some, at least, of the priests at Nob were not altogether ignorant of the trend of affairs.

**22. I have occasioned the death, etc.** Read, following the LXX and Pesh., 'I am guilty of all the souls of....'

**23. Abide thou with me.** Cp. 1 Kings ii. 26, from which it is clear that Abiathar remained faithful to David.

life seeketh thy life : for with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

**xxiii. 1-14.** *David in Keilah.*

*vv. 1-5.* *David inflicts a great slaughter on the Philistines.*

- 23** And they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-  
**2** floors. Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save  
**3** Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah : how much more then if we go to  
**4** Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver  
**5** the Philistines into thine hand. And David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

**for he...my life seeketh thy life.** It would be more logical to say, 'he that seeketh *thy* life seeketh *my* life,' and probably the text ran so originally.

**xxiii. 1. Keilah.** Situated, according to Josh. xv. 44, in the Shephelah; the modern *Kilā*.

**they rob the threshing-floors.** Such marauding expeditions were probably common, cp. Judg. vi. 3, 4.

**2. And the Lord said,** etc. It is probable that there were two lots, one of which stood for an affirmative, the other for a negative; as it was believed that whichever lot was drawn was by Jehovah's guidance, the result would be rightly described as 'the Lord saith'; the elaboration of the answer based on the simple oracular 'Yes' or 'No' was the duty of the priest to frame; but as he was believed to be the mouth-piece of Jehovah, the entire content of his reply would be regarded as the words of Jehovah; see further note on xiv. 41.

**4. go down.** As Keilah lay in the Shephelah it was lower than the mountain stronghold of Adullam.

**5. and brought away their cattle.** The course of events was probably that David made a raid into Philistine territory first, and took their cattle; this necessitated the Philistines



*zv. 6-14. David escapes from Keilah.*

And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahime- 6  
 lech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an  
 ephod in his hand. And it was told Saul that David was 7  
 come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him  
 into mine hand ; for he is shut in, by entering into a town  
 that hath gates and bars. And Saul summoned all the 8  
 people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David  
 and his men. And David knew that Saul devised mis- 9  
 chief against him ; and he said to Abiathar the priest,  
 Bring hither the ephod. Then said David, O LORD, the 10  
 God of Israel, thy servant hath surely heard that Saul  
 seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my  
 sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his 11  
 hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?  
 O LORD, the God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy  
 servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. Then 12  
 said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my  
 men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They  
 will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, which 13  
 were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah,  
 and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told

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leaving Keilah, which was thus relieved ; then David routed the  
 Philistines who came against him. Unless something of this  
 kind is assumed it is difficult to understand the words 'and  
 brought away their cattle.'

6. This verse, which would come more naturally before *zv. 2*,  
 is probably an explanatory note which has got into the text here  
 by mistake. It was added to show how it was that David was  
 enabled to consult the oracle.

**to Keilah, that...in his hand.** The Hebrew text has got out  
 of order; read, on the basis of the LXX, 'that he came down  
 to Keilah with the ephod in his hand.'

9. **devised mischief.** Lit. 'was forging mischief,' a metaphor  
 taken from working with metal, cp. Gen. iv. 22 ; 1 Kings vii. 14,  
 of working in bronze.

11. **Will the men...his hand?** These words have got in  
 here by mistake from *zv. 12*; omit them with the LXX.

Saul that David was escaped from Keilah ; and he forbore to go forth.

- 14 And David abode in the wilderness in the strong holds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

**xxiii. 15-xxiv. 22.** *Saul's chase after David.*

**xxiii. 15-18.** *David in the wilderness of Ziph.*

- 15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life : and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the wood.  
16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into  
17 the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not : for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee ; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee ; and that also Saul my  
18 father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the LORD : and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

*vv. 19-28. David in the wilderness of Maon.*

- 19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south

**14. the wilderness of Ziph.** Cp. Josh. xv. 24, situated on the border of Edom.

**15. And David saw,** etc. Read, 'And David was in fear because Saul...', cp. v. 17, 'Fear not....'

**in the wood.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'in Horesh,' the modern *Hurêsa*, south of Ziph.

**16. strengthened his hand in God.** I.e. cheered him by encouraging him to trust in God.

**19.** This verse is in the main taken from xxvi. 1. On the relationship of xxiii. 19-xxiv. 22 to chap. xxvi. see the note before xxvi. 1.

**the hill of Hachilah.** Hebrew 'Gibeah of Hachilah'; probably to be identified with the modern hill called *Dahr el-Kôlâ*, lying eastwards of Ziph.

of the desert? Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him up into the king's hand. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have had compassion on me. Go, I pray you, make yet more sure, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me of a certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of the desert. And Saul and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down to the rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the

**the desert.** Hebrew 'the Jeshimon,' meaning the waste, or the desolate place; it was a tract of arid land lying on the eastern part of the hill-country of Judæa, but on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

**22. where his haunt is...there.** The Hebrew text is probably corrupt, read with the LXX, 'where his hurrying foot may be.'

**23. of a certainty.** It is uncertain whether this means 'without fail' or 'with certain news,' i.e. of his whereabouts; the Hebrew will bear either meaning.

**the thousands.** I.e. as R.V. marg., 'the families.'

**24. the wilderness of Maon.** This 'wilderness' took its name from the small town of Maon situated in the hill-country of Judæa on the western shore of the Dead Sea; it has been identified with the modern *Tell Ma'in*. Cp. Josh. xv. 55; 2 Chron. xi. 8.

**the Arabah.** I.e. the great depression lying between the Sea of Galilee and the Gulf of Akabah (the eastern arm of the Red Sea).

**25. he came down to the rock.** It was probably a precipitous cliff with caves or fissures where he could hide. Cp. Judg. xv. 8, xx. 45, 47.

**and abode.** Read, with the LXX, 'which is.'

26 wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his  
 27 men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the  
 28 Philistines have made a raid upon the land. So Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth.

xxiii. 29-xxiv. 22. *David escapes to En-gedi.*

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strong holds of En-gedi.  
 24 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying,  
 2 Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of  
 3 the wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the

26. **And Saul went.** Read, with the LXX, 'and Saul and his men went.'

28. **Sela-hammahlekoth.** Lit. 'the rock of divisions,' i.e. the parting of David and Saul.

xxiii. 29 (=xxiv. 1 in Hebr.). **the strong holds of En-gedi.** En-gedi means 'the fountain of the Kid' (cp. xxiv. 2, 3 where mention is made of wild goats and of the sheepcotes); it overlooks the western shore of the Dead Sea; 'the beautiful fountain bursts forth at once a fine stream upon a narrow terrace or shelf of the mountain. It was, and is, a spot of rich vegetation in a severely desolate wilderness....The strongholds which David and his men inhabited must have lain about the fountain; the narrow shelf could be easily made impregnable' (G. A. Smith). The modern '*Ain Jidī*.'

xxiv. 1. **it was told him,** etc. Saul never seems to have lacked spies who kept a sharp look-out on David's movements and reported them to their master, cp. xxii. 6, 22, xxiii. 19 ff.

2. **wild goats.** These still abound in the neighbourhood of '*Ain Jidī*.'

way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet. Now David and his men were abiding in the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said unto 4 him, Behold, the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's 5 heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should 6 do this thing unto my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to put forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the LORD'S anointed. So David checked his men with these words, 7

3. **where was a cave.** Various caves have been found around 'Ain Jidi.

**were abiding...cave.** Better, 'were in the recesses of the cave, sitting down'; cp. the title of Ps. lviii.

4-7. These verses as they now stand are not in logical order; the following seems more likely to have been their original sequence: (4<sup>a</sup>) And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. (6) And (David) said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed. (7<sup>a</sup>) So David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. (4<sup>b</sup>) Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. (5) And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. (7<sup>b</sup>) And Saul arose up out of the cave, and went on his way.' It will be seen that in this way the narrative is more consistent and runs more smoothly.

4. **Behold, the day...I will deliver.** Render, 'Behold, the day on which Jehovah saith unto thee, Behold, I am about to deliver...'

5. **David's heart smote him.** 'Heart'=conscience.

**Saul's skirt.** Read, with the LXX, Pesh., Vulg., and several Hebr. MSS, 'the skirt of Saul's robe,' cp. z. 4.

7. **checked.** The Hebr. word means lit., to 'cleave,' or 'tear'; it is probable that the text is corrupt; the Versions render the word variously, and are of no help; it is perhaps better to read 'rebuked.'



and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul  
 8 rose up out of the cave, and went on his way. David  
 also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried  
 after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul  
 looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the  
 9 earth, and did obeisance. And David said to Saul,  
 Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words, saying, Be-  
 10 hold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine  
 eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee  
 to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me  
 kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will  
 not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the  
 11 LORD'S anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see  
 the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the  
 skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see  
 that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand,  
 and I have not sinned against thee, though thou huntest  
 12 after my soul to take it. The LORD judge between me  
 and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine  
 13 hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the  
 ancients, Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness:  
 14 but mine hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is  
 the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue?  
 15 after a dead dog, after a flea. The LORD therefore be

**with these words.** Read 'for their words.'

**10. and some bade me.** The Hebr. text is corrupt; we must either emend so as to read, 'and he (i.e. Jehovah) bade me....,' or else follow the LXX and render, 'and I refused.'

**but mine eye spared thee.** The Hebr. text is again corrupt, read with the LXX, Pesh., 'and I spared thee.'

**11. though thou huntest after.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'though thou layest wait for,' cp. Exod. xxi. 13.

**13.** This verse is a later addition.

**but mine hand,** etc. Repeated from the preceding verse accidentally.

**14. a dead dog.** Cp. 2 Sam. ix. 8, xvi. 9. The dog was an unclean animal among the Israelites, a dead dog doubly so; it

judge, and give sentence between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand. And it came to pass, when David had made an end of 16 speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous 17 than I: for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil. And thou hast declared 18 this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me up into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will 19 he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And 20 now, behold, I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that 21 thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And 22 David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

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was, therefore, a term of the deepest contempt. 'Head of a dog' (cp. 2 Sam. iii. 8) is still used in Palestine as an expression of abuse.

a flea. Cp. xxvi. 20. Fleas exist in swarms in the dust of caves in Palestine.

15. **deliver me out of thine hand.** Lit. 'judge me (that I may be delivered) out of thine hand,' cp. 2 Sam. xviii. 19, 31; the R.V. marg. ('give sentence for me') can be disregarded.

16. **Is this thy voice, my son David?** The identical words occur in xxvi. 17.

18. **thou hast declared...well with me.** The Hebr. text is corrupt; render, 'thou hast increased (lit. 'magnified') this day the good that thou hast done unto me'; the good David had already done was his victory over Goliath (xvii. 46 ff.); cp. Jonathan's words to Saul in xix. 4, 5.

20. **shall be established.** Better, 'shall be confirmed,' 'made sure,' xiii. 14; cp. Gen. xxiii. 20; Num. xxx. 5.

21. **that thou wilt not destroy my name,** etc. For the importance attached to the continuance of a man's name among his posterity, cp. Ps. lxxii. 17; Is. lxvi. 22.

**xxv. 1-44.** *David's relations with Nabal and his wife Abigail.*

*vv. 1-13. Nabal and Abigail.*

**25** And Samuel died ; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

**2** And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel ; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats : and he was  
**3** shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal ; and the name of his wife Abigail : and the woman was of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance : but the man was churlish and evil in his  
**4** doings ; and he was of the house of Caleb. And David

**xxv. 1.** The first part of this verse, as its contents show, has nothing to do with what precedes or follows ; it is based upon xxviii. 3, perhaps with the object of keeping the history of Israel in mind, as the narrative deals so much with the personal life of David.

**the wilderness of Paran.** Read, with the LXX, 'Maon' ; otherwise, as Driver says, we must suppose that 'Paran' is used widely, and that the extreme north-eastern part of it is here intended (cp. Num. x. 12). But the context shows that the LXX must be right here.

**2. there was.** This follows the LXX in adding one word which has fallen out of the Hebrew text.

**whose possessions.** Lit. 'his work,' i.e. the result of his labour.

**Carmel.** Cp. Josh. xv. 55, it has been identified with the ruins still called by the same name, lying to the south of Ziph.

**very great.** I.e. very wealthy, as of Barzillai in 2 Sam. xix. 32 (33 in Hebr.), and of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings iv. 8.

**he was shearing his sheep.** Cp. Gen. xxxviii. 13 ; 2 Sam. xiii. 23. This was observed as a joyous religious festival in ancient Israel.

**3. Nabal.** For the meaning of the name see note on xxv. 25.  
**churlish.** Lit. 'hard.'

**of the house of Caleb.** Cp. xxx. 14 ; Josh. xv. 13-19 ; 1 Chron. ii. 42 ff. The Calebites ('dogs') formed a branch of the children of Kenaz, an Edomite tribe, who settled in the

heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent ten young men, and David said unto the 5 young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name : and thus shall ye say to him that 6 liveth *in prosperity*, Peace be both unto thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers : thy 7 shepherds have now been with us, and we did them no hurt, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and 8 they will tell thee : wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes ; for we come in a good day : give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's 9 young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all

hill-country north of the Negeb, having also possessions in the Negeb itself. They ultimately became absorbed in the tribe of Judah, cp. 1 Chron. ii. 24.

5. **greet him.** Lit. 'ask for peace.'

6. **and thus shall ye say**...in prosperity. The Hebrew text is partly corrupt; emend the text on the basis of the Vulgate, and render: 'And say to him and to his kinsfolk'; see note on xviii. 18.

7. **that thou hast shearers.** I.e. that thou art keeping the sheep-shearing festival.

**and we did them no hurt.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'and we put them not to shame,' cp. v. 5; Ruth ii. 15 ('reproach not'). The meaning is brought out more clearly by rendering: 'Since we put them not to shame...all the while they were in Carmel—ask thy young men, and they will tell thee—therefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes....' See vv. 15, 16, 21. David might well claim some recognition on this score, for it was no small matter to keep a marauding band, such as followed him, from looting; xxiii. 1 shows that plundering expeditions were not regarded as anything extraordinary in those times.

8. **a good day.** I.e. a feast-day, cp. Esther viii. 17, ix. 19, 22. The Hebrew expression (*Yom tob*) is still used in this sense among the Jews.

**whatsoever cometh to thine hand.** I.e. whatever you happen to have.

- 10 those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from  
 11 his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give  
 12 it unto men of whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned on their way, and went back, and came and told him according to all these words.  
 13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

*vv. 14-35. David and Abigail.*

- 14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilder-  
 15 ness to salute our master; and he flew upon them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt,

**9. and ceased.** R.V. marg. 'and remained quiet'; i.e. they waited to see the result of their words.

**10. there be many servants,** etc. A sarcastic allusion to David's flight from Saul.

**11. my water.** In view of what is said in *vv.* 18, 36, the LXX is probably right in reading 'my wine.'

**my flesh that I have killed,** etc. Lit., as R.V. marg. 'my slaughter...'; this implies that sacrifices were offered at this sheep-shearing feast; all comers, according to ancient Israelite custom, should be welcomed and invited to partake of such offerings. Nabal's action was, therefore, doubly reprehensible; for he not only offended against the well-known oriental law of hospitality, but was also guilty of an offence against religious usage.

**14. one of the young men.** The Hebr. text is corrupt; the R.V. follows the LXX.

**he flew upon them.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'he railed on them.'

**15. we were not hurt.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'we were not put to shame,' cp. *v.* 7.



neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: they were 16  
 a wall unto us both by night and by day, all the while we  
 were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know 17  
 and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined  
 against our master, and against all his house: for he is  
 such a son of Belial, that one cannot speak to him. Then 18  
 Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and  
 two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and  
 five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters  
 of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them  
 on asses. And she said unto her young men, Go on 19  
 before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not  
 her husband Nabal. And it was so, as she rode on her 20  
 ass, and came down by the covert of the mountain, that,  
 behold, David and his men came down against her; and  
 she met them. Now David had said, Surely in vain have 21

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**as long as we were conversant with them.** I.e. as long as we were in their company.

**17. such a son of Belial,** etc. See note on i. 16. More correctly, 'he is too much of a son of Belial to speak to,' i.e. to reason with.

**18. measures.** The Hebr. word is *sēāh*, a dry measure, equivalent to one-third of an ephah; see note on i. 24.

**parched corn.** The ears of corn were roasted on a metal plate over the fire, and the dried chaff was then blown away; this is still done in Palestine during the harvest season. Cp. Lev. ii. 14, xxiii. 14; 2 Sam. xvii. 28; Ruth ii. 14.

**clusters of raisins.** Dried grapes pressed together into a cake just as in the case of figs, cp. 2 Sam. vi. 19, xvi. 1; Hos. iii. 1.

**cakes of figs.** Cp. xxx. 12.

**20. by the covert of the mountain.** This either means that the path along which she went ran along the bottom of a hill which shielded the party from being seen by Nabal; or else that the hill-side concealed her from David, her wish being to come suddenly upon him before his men could overpower her and thus prevent her from saying what she wished to. David's words in v. 22 show that anybody belonging to Nabal would meet with but little consideration.

**21. Now David had said,** etc. The words describe David's thoughts on his way to attack Nabal.

I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and  
 22 he hath returned me evil for good. God do so unto the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light so much as one man  
 23 child. And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off her ass, and fell before David on her face, and  
 24 bowed herself to the ground. And she fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me be the iniquity: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and  
 25 and hear thou the words of thine handmaid.— Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young  
 26 men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now therefore let thine enemies, and them that seek evil to my lord, be  
 27 as Nabal.— And now this present which thy servant hath

**have I kept.** Better, 'have I guarded'; suggesting that David had not only prevented his own men from molesting Nabal's belongings in the wilderness, but had also shielded these from other dangers.

**22. unto the enemies of David.** Read, with the LXX, 'unto David.'

**24. And she fell.** These words should be omitted, with the LXX.

**25. Nabal is his name.** R.V. marg. 'Fool,' for Nabal; but this is an inadequate rendering, the word means one who is churlish and illiberal.

**26. from bloodguiltiness.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'from coming into blood.' The reference must be to the fact that Abigail, by coming in this way to David, had averted him from carrying out his original intention as described in v. 22.

**avenging thyself with thine own hand.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'thine own hand saving thee'; the R.V. text gives a correct paraphrase.

**let thine enemies...as Nabal.** Abigail realized that, though

brought unto my lord, let it be given unto the young men that follow my lord. Forgive, I pray thee, the trespass 28 of thine handmaid : for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD ; and evil shall not be found in thee all thy days. And though man be risen up to pursue thee, and 29 to seek thy soul, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God ; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when 30 the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee prince over Israel ; that this shall be no 31 grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either

David had, contrary to his oath, spared Nabal's men who had come with her, yet Nabal himself was doomed. Cp. 2 Sam. xviii. 32.

**27. present.** Lit., with R.V. marg., 'blessing,' so called because of the feelings of good-will of which it is the expression. **that follow my lord.** Lit., 'that walk at the feet of my lord,' cp. Exod. xi. 8; Deut. xi. 6; Judg. iv. 10.

**28. Forgive,** etc. Abigail had committed no trespass against David, but by this self-condemnation she throws herself upon the generosity of David, being convinced that he will not carry out what he had sworn to do.

**29. the bundle of life.** The language here used is, of course, symbolic, meaning that the life of David was precious in God's sight ; but the quaintness of the idea that God keeps the souls of His beloved ones in a bag or bundle of life and slings out those of His enemies, probably re-echoes an ancient conception, namely that the 'external soul' of a man is separable from his body even while living. The Jews still retain this expression in their prayers, but use it of the life hereafter.

**31. that this shall be,** etc. 'Then let not this be to thee a (cause of) tottering [*or* 'staggering,'] or stumbling of heart, (*viz.*) to have shed innocent blood....' Both expressions are peculiar, but the meaning appears to be, 'Let David avoid the difficulties which shedding innocent blood might hereafter involve him in, and the qualms of conscience which will inevitably follow it.' Cp. Is. xxviii. 7; Jer. x. 4; Nah. ii. 11, for the 'tottering' here spoken of.

that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: and when the LORD shall have dealt  
 32 well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid. And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD, the God of  
 33 Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy wisdom, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging myself  
 34 with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the LORD, the God of Israel, liveth, which hath withholden me from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the  
 35 morning light so much as one man child. So David received of her hand that which she had brought him: and he said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

*vv. 36-44. Abigail becomes the wife of David.*

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning  
 37 light. And it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, that his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as  
 38 a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that 39 the LORD smote Nabal, that he died. And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from

33. **wisdom.** R.V. marg. 'discretion.'

35. **and have accepted thy person.** I.e. am graciously disposed towards, cp. Gen. xxxii. 20 (21 in Hebr.).

37. **his heart died within him.** The opposite to the expression 'may your heart live.'

39. **that hath pleaded,** etc. Cp. xxiv. 15; 'pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal.'

the hand of Nabal, and hath kept back his servant from evil : and the evil-doing of Nabal hath the LORD returned upon his own head. And David sent and spake concerning Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the 40 servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed 41 herself with her face to the earth, and said, Behold, thine handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon 42 an ass, with five damsels of hers that followed her ; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel ; and they 43 became both of them his wives. Now Saul had given 44 Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.

**xxvi. 1-25.** *David and Saul in the wilderness of Ziph.*

And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, 26 Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert? Then Saul arose, and went 2 down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in the hill of 3 Hachilah, which is before the desert, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul

**43. Jezreel.** Not the Jezreel in the north of Palestine (Josh. xix. 18), but in the Negeb, also not far from another Carmel, cp. Josh. xv. 56.

**44. Palti.** In 2 Sam. iii. 15 the form of this name is Paltiel; cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 26.

**Gallim.** A place north of Jerusalem, mentioned in Is. x. 30 with Laishah and Anathoth; it has not been identified.

**xxvi.** This chapter is parallel to the section xxiii. 19-xxiv. 22, in some instances the corresponding verses are almost verbally identical. The chapter before us is the older of the two.

**1. the desert.** R.V. marg. 'Jeshimon,' see further the note on xxiii. 19.



4 came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come of a 5 certainty. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, 6 and the people pitched round about him. Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai 7 said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head: and Abner and the people lay 8 round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the 9 second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can put forth his hand against the LORD'S 10 anointed, and be guiltless? And David said, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish.

**4. of a certainty.** R.V. marg. 'to a set place,' see xxiii. 23. The Hebrew word is evidently a corruption for some place-name, but it is impossible to say what. The Versions are of scarcely any help.

**5. the place of the wagons.** R.V. marg. 'barricade.' Cp. xvii. 20.

**6. Ahimelech the Hittite.** This Ahimelech is not mentioned elsewhere.

**Abishai the son of Zeruiah.** Cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 25. The sons of Zeruiah—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel—play an important part during the reign of David. Zeruiah was, according to 1 Chron. ii. 16, the sister of David.

**Who will go down.** Cp. Gideon's secret visit to the enemy's camp with one companion. Judg. vii. 9-11.

**10. or his day shall come,** etc. I.e. either the day of his death

The LORD forbid that I should put forth mine hand 11  
 against the LORD'S anointed : but now take, I pray thee,  
 the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and  
 let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of 12  
 water from Saul's head ; and they gat them away, and no  
 man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake : for they  
 were all asleep ; because a deep sleep from the LORD  
 was fallen upon them. Then David went over to the 13  
 other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off ;  
 a great space being between them : and David cried to 14  
 the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answer-  
 est thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said,  
 Who art thou that criest to the king? And David said 15  
 to Abner, Art not thou a *valiant* man? and who is like to  
 thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept watch  
 over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people  
 in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good 16  
 that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy  
 to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, the  
 LORD'S anointed. And now, see, where the king's spear  
 is, and the cruse of water that was at his head. And 17  
 Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my

will come prematurely (cp. the case of Nabal), or else he will fall by a violent death in battle (which actually happened, see xxxi. 4).

**12. a deep sleep from the Lord.** Cp. Gen. ii. 21, xv. 12. A slumber which was so deep that David's action did not disturb it was ascribed to the direct intervention of Jehovah.

**15. Art not thou a valiant man?** 'Valiant' is not required; the stress is laid on 'man'; as a true man Abner ought to have been keeping watch over his King, for it was known that David and his followers were in the neighbourhood, see *vv.* 1, 2.

**16. worthy to die.** Lit., with R.V. marg., 'sons of death,' cp. xx. 31; 2 Sam. xii. 5 (R.V. marg. in each case).

**and the cruse.** Render, 'and where the cruse is'; the Hebrew text is corrupt.

**17. Saul knew David's voice.** It was too dark for anyone to be recognized; see *v.* 7.

son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O  
 18 king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord pursue after  
 his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in  
 19 mine hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the  
 king hear the words of his servant. If it be the LORD  
 that hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an  
 offering: but if it be the children of men, cursed be they  
 before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day  
 that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of the LORD,  
 20 saying, Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my  
 blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the  
 LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea,

**19. If it be the Lord,** etc. David can only account for Saul's bitter enmity on one of two suppositions: either Jehovah has stirred up Saul's heart against him as a sign of His wrath because he (David) has sinned against God in some way; or else, it is all due to evil-disposed men who have poisoned Saul's mind. In the former case David says he will assuage Jehovah's wrath by making a suitable offering; in the latter case, he will call down Jehovah's curse upon these men.

**let him accept an offering.** Lit., 'may he smell a *mincha*'; see Gen. viii. 21, 'And the Lord smelled the sweet savour'; it is a very primitive conception of Jehovah which is echoed here.

**cursed be they before the Lord.** In those days such a threat occasioned real terror, for it was believed that an uttered curse had dire results.

**not cleave.** Lit., as R.V. marg., 'have no share in.'

**saying, Go, serve other gods.** As David had been driven out of his own land he was unable to worship Jehovah, the God of the land; for, according to ancient Semitic belief, no god could be worshipped outside his own land, cp. Hos. ix. 4; foreign countries were regarded as unclean, see Josh. xxii. 19; Am. vii. 17. When Naaman wishes to serve Jehovah, the God of Israel, in Damascus, it is necessary for him to take two mules' burden of earth from the land of Israel upon which to stand in order to do so, see 2 Kings v. 17. Cp. also 2 Kings xvii. 24-28.

**20. let not my blood...of the Lord.** If his blood were shed outside Jehovah's land, there would be none to take vengeance for it; moreover, he would not be 'gathered to his fathers' in the family burying-place.

**a flea.** Read, with the LXX, 'my life,' which is a far better parallel to 'my blood' in the first half of the verse; it agrees also

as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned : return, my son David : 21 for I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day : behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the spear, O king ! let then one of the young men come over and fetch it. And the LORD 22 shall render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness : forasmuch as the LORD delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much 24 set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be 25 thou, my son David : thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail. So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

## DIVISION V.

xxvii.-xxxi. DAVID AMONG THE PHILISTINES.

## THE DEATH OF SAUL.

xxvii. 1-12. *David at the court of Achish, king of Gath.*vv. 1-4. *David flees to Achish.*

And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one 27

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with the context. The mention of 'a flea' is due to xxiv. 14; it was probably a marginal note here at first, and later on got into the text and was substituted for 'my life.' Or it is also possible that the later narrative in ch. xxiv. ascribes more extravagant language to David than here.

22. *the spear, O king.* R.V. marg., 'another reading is *the king's spear,*' which is perhaps to be preferred.

xxvii. 1. *I shall now perish,* etc. After Saul's words in xxvi. 25 this sounds strange; it is evident that originally ch. xxvii. did not follow ch. xxvi., though what originally intervened between the two chapters it is impossible to say; probably something has fallen out.

day by the hand of Saul : there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines ; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel : so shall I escape out of his hand.

2 And David arose, and passed over, he and the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish the son of Maoch, 3 king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail 4 the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath : and he sought no more again for him.

*vv. 5, 6. At David's request Achish gives him Ziklag.*

5 And David said unto Achish, If now I have found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there : for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? 6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day : wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

**there is nothing better...escape.** Better, following the LXX, 'I have no good except I escape...'; i.e. he sees it is useless as well as dangerous to stay in the land of Israel; nothing remains but that he should leave his country.

**2. the six hundred men.** Cp. xxiii. 13, 2 Sam. xv. 18.

**unto Achish, etc.** With this and the following verses cp. xxi. 10-15; the two passages deal with the same event, but they are from different sources, the one before us being the earlier of the two; see the note before xxi. 10.

**3. every man with his household.** Cp. 2 Sam. ii. 3; i.e. they took their wives and children with them.

**5. in one of the cities, etc.** The request was evidently made because David felt he would be safer in a country-town than in one of the more important towns where his presence would be more likely to become known.

**for why should, etc.** Said in order to conceal David's real purpose, viz. privacy; he who had resided at the court of Saul was qualified to dwell in the royal city of Achish.

**6. Ziklag.** Thus originally a Philistine city, but joined to Judæa through David's instrumentality, cp. Josh. xv. 31; Neh.



*vv. 7-12. David's raid into the south of Judæa.*

And the number of the days that David dwelt in the 7  
country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.  
And David and his men went up, and made a raid upon 8  
the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites: for  
those *nations* were the inhabitants of the land, which  
were of old, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of  
Egypt. And David smote the land, and saved neither 9  
man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the  
oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel;  
and he returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, 10  
Whither have ye made a raid to-day? And David said,  
Against the South of Judah, and against the South of

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xi. 28. It has been identified with the modern *Zuhēliqe*, a heap of ruins south-east of Gaza.

8. **went up.** In Hebrew a technical military term used for going out to attack an enemy, cp. vii. 7; Judg. i. 1, xii. 3, etc.; Is. xxi. 2.

**the Geshurites, and the Girzites.** Read, with the LXX, 'all the Gezerites'; that there was a Canaanite tribe living in Gezer (on the western border of Judæa close to the land of the Philistines) is clear from Judg. i. 29; 1 Kings ix. 16; this has been amply confirmed by the discovery of pre-Israelite remains found during the recent excavations on the site of ancient Gezer.

**the Amalekites.** Cp. xv. 7, 8; they occupied the territory not only immediately south-west of the Dead Sea, but also the whole land extending to the frontier of Egypt and down to the Sinaitic peninsula. The Amalekites do not seem ever to have settled down in any part of Palestine proper.

**for those nations were the inhabitants of the land.** The Hebrew text is corrupt; perhaps we should read: 'For those are the populations that inhabited the land.'

**which were of old.** R.V. marg., 'some copies of the LXX have "from Telam"'; this is probably the rendering of what the Hebrew read originally. Telam was situated in the Negeb (the *dry* land), i.e. the district in the south of Judæa which formed the transition between the cultivated land and the wilderness; cp. Josh. xv. 24 (Telem).

**as thou goest to Shur.** Cp. xv. 7; Gen. xvi. 7; Exod. xv. 22.

10. **Whither have ye, etc.** The Hebrew text is corrupt; render, with the LXX, 'against whom have ye...'

- the Jerahmeelites, and against the South of the Kenites.
- 11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring them to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so hath been his manner all the while
- 12 he hath dwelt in the country of the Philistines. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

**xxviii. 1-25.** *Saul and the witch of Endor.*

*vv. 1, 2. The Philistines prepare for battle.*

- 28 And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their hosts together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me in the host, thou
- 2 and thy men. And David said to Achish, Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

*vv. 3-6. Saul's fear.*

- 3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits,

**the Jerahmeelites...the Kenites.** Clans which had settled in the south of Judæa; cp. xv. 6, xxx. 29; Judg. i. 16.

**12. therefore he shall be my servant for ever.** Cp. xxix. 2. Later on, however, Achish dismissed David owing to the suspicion of the other Philistine lords, see xxix. 6-11.

**xxviii. 2. thou shalt know,** etc. I.e. David would by his action show Achish his loyalty. The LXX is no doubt right in reading, '*now thou shalt know....*'

**vv. 3-25** are out of their proper place here as they break the narrative between xxviii. 2 and xxix. 1 ff.; they would come more appropriately after ch. xxx.

**3. And Saul...out of the land.** These words are intended to prepare the reader for what is said in v. 9.

and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines 4 gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host 5 of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the 6 LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

*vv. 7-10. Saul at Endor.*

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman 7 that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, 8

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those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards. They were condemned at all times by the religious teachers of Israel. Cp. Exod. xxii. 18; Lev. xix. 31, xx. 27; Deut. xviii. 10, 11; Is. viii. 19. A 'wizard' and 'one who had a familiar spirit' were probably two designations for the same kind of person, either man or woman, namely one who claimed the power of learning from the departed spirits concerning future events.

4. **Shunem.** Cp. Josh. xix. 18; a border town of Issachar, on the north of the valley of Jezreel, opposite Gilboa; it has been identified with the modern *Sâlem*, a village five miles south of Tabor.

**Gilboa.** Cp. xxxi. 1, 8, 2 Sam. i. 6, 21, xxi. 12; a range of hills now called *Jebel Fakû'a*, on the eastern boundary of the plain of Esdraelon; the modern *Gelbôn* situated in the centre of the range.

5. **when Saul saw the host, etc.** The Philistines were encamped to the north-west of the Israelites, and in full view of Saul.

6. **by dreams.** Not such as Saul himself might have dreamed, but dreams which a certain type of prophet had whereby the future was supposed to be discerned, cp. Num. xii. 6; Jer. xxiii. 25.

7. **that hath a familiar spirit.** The Hebrew is lit. 'that is mistress of a familiar spirit.'

**En-dor.** Cp. Josh. xvii. 11; the modern *Endûr*, lying to the south of Tabor.

and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night : and he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whom-  
 9 soever I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land : wherefore then layest thou  
 10 a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

*vv. 11-19. Saul and the shade of Samuel.*

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto  
 12 thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice :

**8. Divine unto me...by the familiar spirit.** Cp. Deut. xviii. 10; the familiar spirit was supposed to come into the wizard, who had the power of compelling the spirit to take up its abode in her, and by means of which she could conjure other spirits.

**bring...up.** It was believed that the spirit was brought up from Sheol, the 'nether parts of the earth' (Ezek. xxxii. 24; cp. Deut. xxxii. 22; Job xi. 8; Ps. lxxxvi. 13; Is. xiv. 15), where, according to the ancient Hebrew belief, the shades of the departed dwelled.

**9. what Saul hath done,** etc. Apart from *v.* 3, there is no mention of Saul having done this.

**10. there shall no punishment...thing.** Lit. 'there shall no guilt come upon thee for this thing'; it is not a question of punishment, for as Saul was disguised (it is not until *v.* 12 that he is recognized) the witch would not have been reassured by a stranger telling her that she would not be punished. Saul intends by his words to persuade the witch that there is nothing wrong in what he wishes her to do.

**12. when the woman saw Samuel,** etc. The difficulties of the verse as it stands are obvious. Why should the witch cry out when she beholds Samuel, seeing that she expected his appearance? How should the appearance of Samuel make her recognize Saul? If when Saul bade her bring up Samuel she had suspected who the stranger was, there would have been nothing surprising.

and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto <sup>13</sup> her, Be not afraid : for what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she <sup>14</sup> said, An old man cometh up ; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

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The text as it now stands is illogical. The difficulties are at once removed if we read: 'And the woman looked at Saul' (in Hebrew the names Saul and Samuel look very similar and could very easily be interchanged by mistake), which is the rendering of four LXX manuscripts; i.e. when Saul asked her to bring up Samuel, the request induced her to look scrutinizingly at the stranger, and then she saw that he was Saul. This makes the meaning of the words which follow quite plain; she cries with a loud voice because she fears that she will be punished, and reproaches Saul for having deceived her. She is only reassured when Saul tells her not to be afraid.

**13. for what seest thou?** Read more graphically, with the LXX: 'Speak, who dost thou see?'

**a god.** *Elohim*; this use of the word in reference to a departed spirit is exceptional; it is probably an echo of the worship of the dead, cp. the words in the next verse, where it is said that Saul, on perceiving that it was Samuel, 'bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.'

**14. What form is he of?** Saul does not himself see Samuel; it is only the witch who sees him by means of the 'familiar spirit' abiding in her. So too with the conversation between Saul and Samuel (*vv.* 15-19); this, it is to be assumed, was carried on through the witch who acted as intermediary, or 'medium.' It must be remembered that the witch's action is by no means to be put down to conscious fraud; there are in all ages persons of a certain temperament who believe themselves to be endowed with supernatural insight, and who on that very account are able to work themselves up to such a pitch of mental excitement that their over-wrought imagination conjures up the most extraordinary visions, which they honestly believe they see in reality.

**he is covered with a robe.** This, according to *xv.* 27, was the way in which Samuel was dressed when alive; that he should be described thus shows, of course, that the appearance could only have taken place in the witch's mental vision.



- 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what  
 16 I shall do. And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and  
 17 is become thine adversary? And the LORD hath wrought for himself, as he spake by me: and the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neigh-  
 18 bour, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, and didst not execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing  
 19 unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines:

**15. Why hast thou disquieted me?** The same Hebrew root is used in the same connexion in Is. xiv. 9, 'Hell from beneath is moved....'

**God is departed from me.** Lit., '...from over me,' expressing the idea that God was no more watching over him.

**that thou mayest make known.** Samuel is still conceived of as partaking of the prophetic gift which he exercised during his lifetime, cp. iii. 20, ix. 9, and Ecclus. xvi. 20 (LXX), 'And after he fell asleep he prophesied' (though the Hebrew has, 'he was inquired of'), 'and shewed the king his end.'

**16. is become thine adversary.** The Hebrew text is corrupt; read, following the LXX and Pesh., 'is become on the side of thy neighbour,' i.e. David, see next verse.

**17. hath wrought for himself.** Read, with the LXX and Vulg., 'hath done to thee.'

**18.** Cp. xv. 26 ff.; this verse is probably a later addition; the words 'therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day' are inappropriate, for as yet nothing had been done.

**19.** The text of this verse can scarcely be in order, the first and last sentences being almost identical; it is best to omit the first sentence, and for the rest of the verse to follow the LXX, and read: 'And to-morrow thou and thy sons with thee will be fallen; yea, also, the camp of Israel will Jehovah give into the hand of the Philistines.'

and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me : the LORD shall deliver the host of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.

*vv. 20-25. Saul's despair.*

Then Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth, 20 and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel : and there was no strength in him ; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. And the woman 21 came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath hearkened unto thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto 22 the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee ; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. But he refused, 23 and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him ; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house ; 24 and she hasted, and killed it ; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof : and 25 she brought it before Saul, and before his servants ; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

**xxix. 1-11.** *David's departure from the Philistine country.*

*vv. 1-5. The Philistines assemble for battle.*

Now the Philistines gathered together all their hosts 29

**thou and thy sons.** See xxxi. 2.

**20. Then Saul fell,** etc. Read, with the LXX, 'Then was Saul dismayed, and fell....'

**24. a fatted calf.** Animals were usually fattened and slaughtered for sacrificial meals ; and therefore to kill one for a single guest was a mark of high honour, cp. Gen. xviii. 7.

to Aphek and the Israelites pitched by the fountain  
 2 which is in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines  
 passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: and David  
 and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish.  
 3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these  
 Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the  
 Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the  
 king of Israel, which hath been with me these days or  
 these years, and I have found no fault in him since he  
 4 fell away *unto me* unto this day? But the princes of the  
 Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the  
 Philistines said unto him, Make the man return, that he  
 may go back to his place where thou hast appointed him,  
 and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the  
 battle he become an adversary to us: for wherewith

**xxix. 1. Aphek.** Cp. iv. 1; Josh. xii. 8; it lay in the plain of Sharon, but has not been identified with certainty.

**the fountain which is in Jezreel.** By Jezreel is meant the plain, not the city, of this name; the 'fountain,' or better 'spring,' is probably to be identified with 'the spring of Harod' mentioned in Judg. vii. 1, called now *En Isālūd* ('the spring of Goliath').

**3. ...these days or these years.** See note on i. 3; read, with the LXX, 'who hath been with me now two years.'

**since he fell away unto me.** I.e. since he deserted to me (cp. Jer. xxxvii. 13); the words 'unto me' are not expressed in Hebrew, but linguistic usage requires them, and they must have stood there originally; they are expressed in all the Versions.

**4. the princes of the Philistines (2°).** This second mention of them is not required, omit the words with the LXX, Pesh. and Vulg.

**his place where thou hast appointed him.** I.e. Ziklag, see xxvii. 6, and cp. xxx. 1.

**go down...to battle.** Cp. xxx. 24 where the phrase is used more appropriately from the point of view of the Israelites who lived in the hill-country and had to go down to a battle in the plain, whereas the Philistines were already pitched in the plain; in v. 9 Achish speaks of the Philistines 'going up' to battle, see also v. 11.

**an adversary.** The Hebrew word is that from which 'Satan' comes; it is used in the O.T. generally as one who stands in the way of anyone, whether an ordinary foe 2 Sam. xix. 22; 1 Kings

should this *fellow* reconcile himself unto his lord? should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, 5 of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying,

Saul hath slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands?

*vv. 6-11. David and his men leave Achish.*

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, As the 6 LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, 7 that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And 8 David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been before thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king? And 9 Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early 10 in the morning with the servants of thy lord that are

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v. 14, xi. 14, 23, 25; Ps. cix. 6 (and R.V. marg.), or a supernatural messenger from God, cp. Num. xxii. 22; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. The Philistines had once before had the experience of desertions on the part of the Hebrews in the day of battle (see xiv. 21), so that their objection to the presence of David and his band was not unreasonable.

5. **Saul hath slain**, etc. Cp. xviii. 7, xxi. 11.

6. **thy going out and thy coming in**. A frequent mode of expressing ordinary intercourse in the O.T., cp. 2 Sam. iii. 25; 2 Kings xix. 27; Ps. cxxi. 8; Is. xxxvii. 28.

9. **as an angel of God**. Cp. 2 Sam. xiv. 17, xix. 27; in Hebrew the word for 'angel' and 'messenger' is the same; the use of the expression by Achish shows how attached he had become to David.

10. **with the servants**, etc. Read, with the LXX, 'thou and

come with thee : and as soon as ye be up early in the  
 11 morning, and have light, depart. So David rose up early,  
 he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into  
 the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up  
 to Jezreel.

**xxx. 1-31.** *David punishes the Amalekites for their  
 raid on Ziklag.*

*vv. 1-6. David returns to Ziklag.*

**30** And it came to pass, when David and his men were  
 come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had  
 made a raid upon the South, and upon Ziklag, and had  
 2 smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire ; and had taken  
 captive the women *and all* that were therein, both small

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the servants....' It sounds strange that Achish should say 'the servants of thy lord' (i.e. Saul) in reference to David's band of freebooters (cp. xxii. 2); presumably he was unaware of the real relations between David and Saul; cf. v. 3 'David the servant of Saul.'

**and as soon as ye be up early**, etc. This second half of the verse is very similar to the first half, and as it stands the text seems to repeat itself unnecessarily; it is probable that in the LXX we have the rendering of the original Hebrew; after the words 'that are come with thee,' the LXX has: 'and go to the place which I have appointed for you, and harbour no bitterness in thine heart, for thou art dear in my sight'; then follow the words of our text, 'and as soon as....' If the text is read in this way there is seen to be no unnecessary repetition.

**11. into the land of the Philistines.** I.e. to Ziklag, whereas the Philistines, being encamped in Aphek, were in Israelite territory.

**xxx. 1. the South.** I.e. the Negeb, which is used in connexion with different districts, see xxvii. 10; it is possible, judging from v. 14, that we should read here 'the Negeb of the Cherethites.'

**burned it with fire.** During the excavation of Gezer, as well as of other ancient Palestine cities, the marks of extended conflagrations were distinctly visible; these had evidently been the results of hostile attacks such as that here recorded, cp. Josh. vi. 24, xi. 11 ff.; Judg. xviii. 27; 1 Kings ix. 16.

**2. and all that were therein.** The words 'and all' are not expressed in the Hebrew, but must have stood there originally; they are preserved in the LXX. .



and great : they slew not any, but carried them off, and went their way. And when David and his men came to 3 the city, behold, it was burned with fire ; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up 4 their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, 5 Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed ; for 6 the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters : but David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

*vv. 7-16. David pursues the Amalekites.*

And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of 7 Ahimelech, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And 8 David inquired of the LORD, saying, If I pursue after this troop, shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue : for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and shalt without fail recover *all*. So David went, he and 9 the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

**6. spake of stoning him.** Cp. Exod. xvii. 4 ; Num. xiv. 10. The resentment of the people against David was occasioned on account of his having left the city unprotected, so that he was regarded as in a sense responsible for the calamity which had overtaken them.

**David strengthened himself in, etc.** This is explained by what is said in *vv.* 7, 8.

**8. inquired of the Lord.** Cp. xxii. 10, where the reference is again to the use of the ephod.

**If I pursue.** Read, with R.V. marg., 'Shall I pursue?'

**troop.** I.e. a marauding band, cp. 1 Kings xi. 24 ; 2 Kings v. 2, vi. 23 ; 1 Chron. xii. 21 (19 in Hebr.).

**9. the brook Besor.** Not identified with certainty, but perhaps

- 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men : for two hundred stayed behind, which were so faint that they  
 11 could not go over the brook Besor : and they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat ; and they gave him  
 12 water to drink : and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins ; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him : for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. And  
 13 David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite ; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We made a raid  
 14 upon the South of the Cherethites, and upon that which

the modern *Wādi Ghazza*, a tributary of the *Wādi er-Seba'* ; it flows into the sea a little south of Gaza.

**where those that were left behind stayed.** These words are clearly a later addition, added in reference to what is said in the next verse. The Hebrew letters can also stand for numerals; when the numerical values of the letters in this sentence are added together they make up, as Wellhausen has pointed out, this sum : 200 = 600 - 400.

**10. But David...four hundred men.** As the Hebrew stands these words would come more logically at the end of the verse, but the R.V. conceals this by saying, '*for* two hundred stayed behind.'

**12. a piece of a cake of figs.** The Hebrew word for a 'piece' here means ordinarily a 'mill-stone'; the words should be rendered lit. 'a mill-stone of figs'; it was so called probably on account of its circular shape and solidity, and consisted of figs closely pressed together.

**his spirit came again to him.** He had evidently fainted from hunger and thirst, and the food and drink revived him ; for the phrase cp. Judg. xv. 19.

**14. We made a raid upon.** 'Upon' has fallen out of the Hebrew text by accident, but the LXX expresses it.

**the South of the Cherethites.** Cp. xxvii. 10 ; it was a district in the south, or Negeb, of Judæa, inhabited by the Cherethites. These people were closely connected with the Philistines, so much so that in Zeph. ii. 5 ; Ezek. xxv. 16 the two are identified. The name Cherethite is probably to be connected with Crete,

belongeth to Judah, and upon the South of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, 15 Wilt thou bring me down to this troop? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this troop. And when he had 16 brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the ground, eating and drinking, and feasting, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

*vv. 17-20. David utterly destroys the Amalekites.*

And David smote them from the twilight even unto the 17 evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled. And David recovered all that the 18 Amalekites had taken: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small 19 nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David brought back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, 20 *which* they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.

whence, according to Am. ix. 7, the Philistines came (Caphtor in that passage = Crete). According to 2 Sam. viii. 18, xv. 18, xx. 7, the Cherethites formed part of David's body-guard after he became king; cp. 1 Kings i. 38, 44; 1 Chron. xviii. 17.

**16. feasting.** The Hebrew word means 'making merry' as at a feast.

**17. of the next day.** This is an obvious exaggeration; the Hebrew text is corrupt, and should probably be emended so as to be rendered: 'so as to destroy them utterly' (see xv. 3).

**which rode upon camels.** The Bedouin tribes always possessed flocks of camels, cp. Judg. viii. 21; Is. xxi. 7.

**18. and David rescued his two wives.** Cp. v. 5.

**20.** The meaning of this verse is obscure as it stands; the Hebrew text is corrupt; read: 'And he took all the flocks and the herds, and they drove them before him and said, This is David's spoil.'

*vv. 21-25. David's return.*

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they had made to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he  
 22 saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them  
 23 away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given unto us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the troop that  
 24 came against us into our hand. And who will hearken unto you in this matter? for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by  
 25 the stuff: they shall share alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel, unto this day.

**21. near to the people.** Better, 'with the people' (as R.V. marg.).

**he saluted.** Read, with the LXX, 'they saluted,' i.e. the two hundred who had been left behind. Lit. 'they asked them of their welfare' (R.V. marg.), cp. Judg. xviii. 15.

**22. men of Belial.** R.V. marg. has 'base fellows' for 'men of Belial,' and then explains the word Belial to mean 'worthlessness'; cp. the similar treatment at i. 16 and ii. 12, and cp. Deut. xiii. 13.

**save to every man his wife and his children.** Even these could not, according to the strict laws of warfare in those days, be claimed by the two hundred who had been left behind, because every person as well as everything captured in war was the property of the captor.

**23. with that which the Lord, etc.** Read, with the LXX, 'after that the Lord....'

**24. for as his share is, etc.** Cp. Num. xxxi. 27; Josh. xxii. 8. **by the stuff.** See note on x. 22.

**25. a statute and an ordinance.** Cp. Gen. xlvii. 26; Judg.

*vv. 26-31. David sends the spoil taken from the Amalekites to all his friends in Judah.*

And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil 26 unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; to them which were in Beth-el, and to them 27 which were in Ramoth of the South, and to them which were in Jattir; and to them which were in Aroer, and to 28 them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa; and to them which were in Racal, and to 29

xi. 39. It was by customs arising from particular occasions that much of Israelite law was formed.

**26. the elders of Judah.** There was evidently a strong party in Judah favourable to David's cause, but this is the first indication since his absence from Judah that we have of the fact. It is evident that during all this period he must have kept up communications with them.

**a present.** Lit. 'a blessing,' cp. xxv. 27.

**the enemies of the Lord.** The enemies of the people are the enemies of the national god. The same is seen on the 'Moabite Stone' with regard to the god Chemosh and the Moabites his people.

**27. Beth-el.** Not the well-known Bethel north of Jerusalem, but a place in the south of Judah, near Ziklag, called Bethul in Josh. xix. 4, and Bethuel in 1 Chron. iv. 30.

**Ramoth of the South.** Cp. Josh. xix. 8, according to which it should be written *Ramath* (so too the LXX here).

**Jattir.** Cp. Josh. xv. 48, xxi. 14; probably to be identified with the ruins of 'Attir lying on a hill to the north-east of Beer-sheba, close to the desert.

**28. Aroer.** Read *Arara*, cp. Josh. xv. 22 (where *Adadah* is a corruption of *Arara*; 'r' and 'd' are often quite indistinguishable in ancient Hebrew characters); this form, though not used in the LXX, is suggested by it, as it is clear that in the Hebrew text used by the translators another letter followed after Aroer. The name *Arara* exists to the present day, some ruins lying to the south-east of Beer-sheba being so called.

**Siphmoth.** This place is not mentioned elsewhere; it has not been identified.

**Eshtemoa.** Cp. Josh. xv. 50, xxi. 14; 1 Chron. iv. 17, 19; the modern village *Semūa*, situated on a hill to the south-west of Ziph.



them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and  
 30 to them which were in the cities of the Kenites; and to  
 them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in  
 31 Cor-ashan, and to them which were in Athach; and to  
 them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where  
 David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

**xxxi.** 1-13. *The Battle of Mount Gilboa.*

*vv.* 1-7. *The death of Saul.*

**31** Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the  
 men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell  
 2 down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed  
 hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines  
 slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons  
 3 of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the  
 archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed by  
 4 reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armour-

**29. Racal.** Read, with the LXX, 'Carmel,' cp. xxv. 2; Josh. xv. 55; in Hebrew the two names look very similar.

**30. Hormah.** A city in the remote south of Judah, cp. Num. xiv. 45, xxi. 3; Josh. xv. 30.

**Cor-ashan.** Read *Bor-ashan* (cp. R.V. marg.), which is the correct Hebrew reading, and is also found in one manuscript of the LXX; it is probably the same place as Ashan mentioned in Josh. xv. 42, xix. 7.

**Athach.** Written *Ether* in Josh. xv. 42, xix. 7, which is evidently the same place; its identity has not been established with certainty.

**31. Hebron.** Of which later on David was king for seven years and a half before he became king of the whole land, see 2 Sam. ii. 1-4, v. 5.

**xxxi.** This chapter occurs, with slight variations, in 1 Chron. x.; it takes up the main narrative again which was broken at the end of xxix. in order to describe David's doings.

**1. and fell down slain.** I.e. the slain lay scattered.

**2. Abinadab.** 'Ishir' in xiv. 49.

**3. overtook.** Better 'discovered' (lit. 'found').

**he was greatly distressed.** Lit. 'he trembled greatly.'

**4.** Cp. Judg. ix. 54, where somewhat similar words are addressed by Abimelech to his armour-bearer.

bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was 5 dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, 6 and all his men, that same day together. And when the 7 men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

*vv. 8-13. The Philistines mutilate Saul's body.*

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philis- 8 tines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off 9 his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry the tidings unto the house of their idols, and to the people. And 10

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**these uncircumcised.** Used in Judg. xiv. 3 also in reference to the Philistines.

**abuse me.** R.V. marg. 'make a mock of me'; the same Hebrew word is used in Num. xxii. 29, where Balaam says to his ass, 'Because thou hast mocked me....'

**and fell upon it.** Cp. 2 Sam. i. 6; the account in 2 Sam. i. is probably a parallel account, from a different source, of this episode; it differs in several respects from the account before us.

**6. and all his men.** Omit, with the LXX; for in the next verse it is said that 'the men of Israel fled.'

**7. the valley.** I.e. the valley, or rather plain, of Jezreel (cp. Hos. i. 5) on the east of which mount Gilboa lay.

**9. they cut off his head.** Cp. xvii. 51, 2 Sam. xx. 22.

**and sent,** etc. I.e. they sent messengers.

**to carry...of their idols.** Read, with the LXX, 'to carry the tidings to their idols' (so, too, in 1 Chron. x. 9), i.e. to acquaint their gods with the news of the victory.

they put his armour in the house of the Ashtaroth : and  
 11 they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. And  
 when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning  
 12 him that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the  
 valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body  
 of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-  
 shan ; and they came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.  
 13 And they took their bones, and buried them under the  
 tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

**10. the house of the Ashtaroth.** Read, with the LXX, the sing. 'Ashtoreth' (in the text it is the plur. form); there was a temple of Ashtoreth in Askelon, and it is probably this to which the reference is made here. See, further, note on vii. 3.

**and they fastened,** etc. Read 'and they exposed...', cp. 2 Sam. xxi. 6.

**Beth-shan.** Also written Beth-shean, cp. Josh. xvii. 11; Judg. i. 17; the modern *Beisān*, situated at the entrance to the vale of Jezreel.

**12. and burnt them there.** These words are omitted in the parallel account in 1 Chron. x. 12, and cp. 2 Sam. xxi. 12-14. It is extremely unlikely that the bodies would have been burned in view of such passages as Lev. xx. 14, xxi. 9; Josh. vii. 25, embodying as they do ancient custom, where this is only done in the case of the worst criminals; in Am. ii. 1, too, the burning of the bones of the king of Edom is spoken of as a transgression which shall not go unpunished; probably the Hebrew text is corrupt, a very slight alteration in the text would enable us to render 'and mourned for them there'; this commends itself also for the reason that mourning and fasting belonged together, see 2 Sam. i. 12, iii. 32-35.

**13. the tamarisk tree.** Cp. xxii. 6, in the parallel passage in 1 Chron. x. 12, 'oak' (or 'terebinth').

**and fasted seven days.** Cp. Gen. l. 10. A custom which is retained among the Jews to the present day.

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